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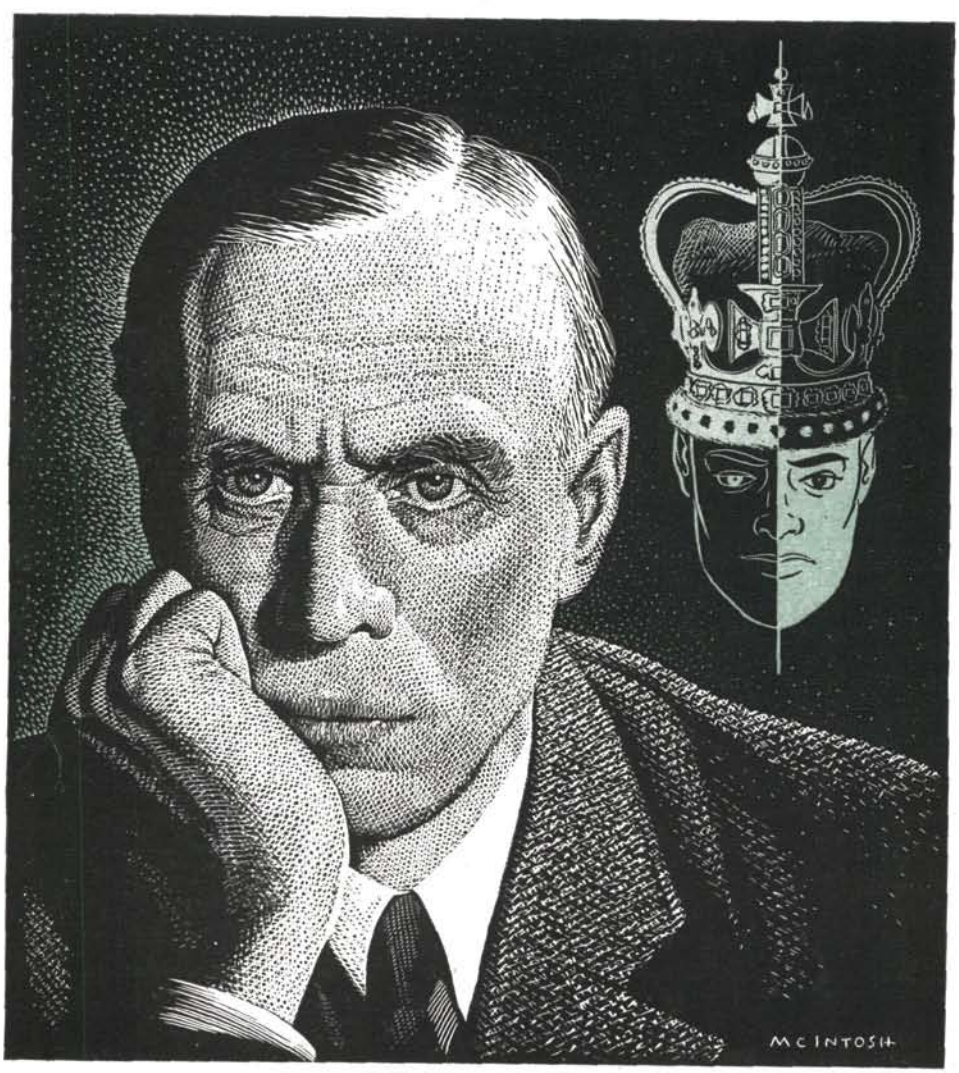

Sinclair Lewis, author of "Kingsblood Royal." (See page 9)

Non-Fiction and the Chromosomes

By JOHN F. WHARTON

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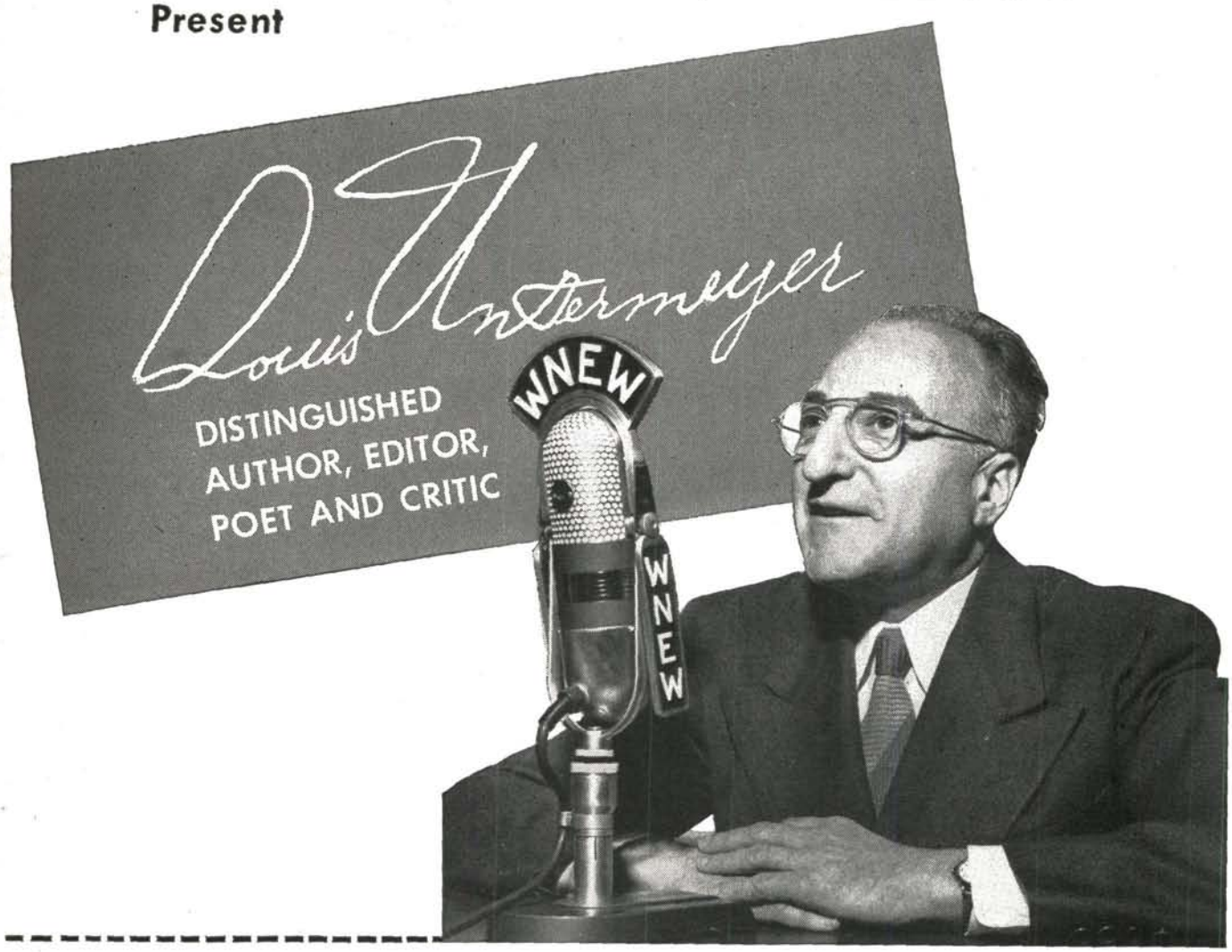

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May 24, 1947

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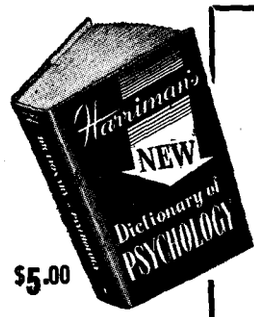

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TRADE Winds

THIS COLUMN IS a love letter to San Francisco.

To Americans in general, San Francisco means the days of '49, and clipper ships, and the Barbary Coast, and the Golden Gate, and hills that are steeper than in any other metropolis in the world. It is the city whose heart was destroyed by earthquake and fire in 1906, that rose again in new beauty and with all the old spirit.

To booklovers, San Francisco is the city that inspired Bret Harte, Ambrose Bierce, Frank Norris, and Jack London, and, in later years, so many disciples that today there are more books in print about San Francisco than even London or New York.

To the denizens of Publishers' Row, San Francisco means Joseph Henry Jackson, dean of West Coast critics and commentators, and the Grabhorns, greatest American printers of our day, and booksellers like Jack Newbegin, Leon Gelber, and Paul Elder —men who have spent their lives in the trade and regard books as literature—not merchandise.

The old ferries have been replaced by two giant bridges—already inadequate to handle the rush-hour traffic. Even the cable cars, cherished relics of a city that was, are threatened with extinction—if the present unsentimental and economy-minded mayor has his way. When I was there, it appeared, however, that the cars would stay, and the mayor would just about escape with his life. The view from the cocktail lounge atop the Mark Hopkins nobody can destroy; it is the most exciting in the country. Trader Vic continues to perform miracles with spareribs in Oakland across the bay. (Could it have been sheer forgetfulness that prompted the omission of this one recipe from the cook book he whipped up for Doubleday?) The Palace and St. Francis cling to the outmoded belief that hotel food can be properly cooked. The Di Maggio family serve delectable crabs on Fisherman's Wharf and watch Brother Joe's efforts to bolster the atrophying Yankees. The buildings where the concept of the United Nations was formulated look deserted and forlorn. On the wall of one a cynic has chalked, "Geneva papers please copy." . . .

ONE DAY SHORTLY after the turn of the century, a Boston publisher whose warehouse was cluttered with several hundred unsold sets of a fair-to-middling encyclopedia ran into a real estate promoter who also was suffering from enlargement of the inventory. The latter had sunk his fortune in a California subdivision named Huntington Beach. There were sidewalks and lampposts and sand and the Pacific—but no houses.

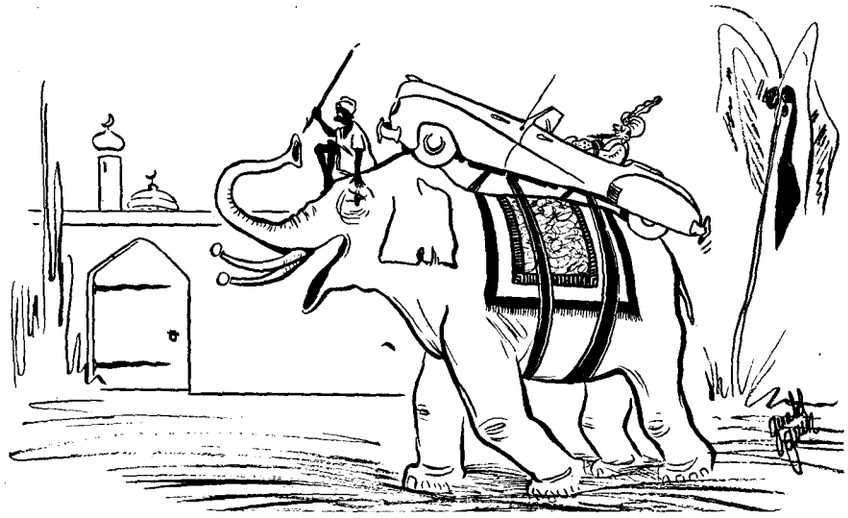
The publisher bought the land tract for a song, and the following week his canvassers offered frugal New England farmers an irresistible bargain: a set of the encyclopedia at the original published price, plus a choice lot in sunny California as an outright gift. The scheme worked like a charm, and the relieved publisher sold his entire stock. The buyers tucked their deeds, unread, in trunks in the attic, and their encyclopedias, also unread, in glass-enclosed parlor bookcases.

Years later oil was discovered in Huntington Beach—and the very heart of the deposit was the tract that had been given away with the encyclopedias! Some of the farmers who had bought the sets had vanished completely; the children of others were persuaded to sell what they thought were worthless deeds for a few hundred dollars. A few, however, anxious to see for themselves why slick attorneys suddenly were camping on their doorsteps, bought railroad tickets for California. The trip proved worth while. Some of the wells brought in on the Huntington tract are still producing. "Encyclopedia Number Four" was one of the richest in all California.

A few miles from the Stanford campus in Palo Alto there is a beautiful estate whose present owner neither toils nor spins. He owes his life of gilded ease to the fact that his father, who owned a scrabbly potato patch in Maine, was one of a handful of lucky and tenacious folk who fell for the blandishments of a book canvasser, and bought an encyclopedia on the instalment plan. . . .

BEFORE S. J. PERELMAN left San Francisco for his round-the-world jaunt (his pieces are now appearing in *Holiday* magazine), Harry Kurnitz cautioned him, "Sid, if you expect to have anything to do with those native beauties in the South Pacific, be sure to boil them first." . . . I was awaked at seven one morning at the Mark Hopkins by a wire from Irving Hoffman. It read, "Did you hear about the tree surgeon who fell out of his patient?" . . . George Stewart's new novel, "Fire," is the story of a great forest fire, and will reintroduce the young meteorologist from "Storm." . . . David Magee is writing a novel about Shelley for S. and S. His new partner, Constance Spencer, is running the shop in his absence. Quail Hawkins, of Sather Gate, is also working on a book—a juvenile. . . . Near the attractive new Middleton-Harper Bookshop is a candy store that bears the intriguing sign, "Awful Fresh MacFarlane, the Scotch Candy Maker. Twenty Degrees Sweeter Inside!" . . . Eudora Welty, visiting friends in San Francisco, led a normal life there until Danny Kaye came to town. She saw his act fourteen times in one week, barely resisted his invitation to come out from the wings for an on-stage gambol, and informed me gravely, "In pagan days, when Dionysus conducted the revels, frenzies, and whatever, somebody with a genius like Danny's must have been out there getting the crowd to sing back the hi-de-hos." . . .

STUART CUNNINGHAM, of Lieberman's Book Shop on Market Street, had a legal tangle with one William Randolph Hearst over a little volume called "Memoirs of Hecate County."



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The winnah and undefeated champeen: Stuart Cunningham. One of the jurors was a tough and dour-faced longshoreman, who scowled grimly throughout the trial, and obviously was regarded as an ace in the hole by the prosecution. After Cunningham had been acquitted, the longshoreman told him, "When I first read 'Hecate' I couldn't reconcile it with Edmund Wilson's critical essays, but then I went back and read his early novels, and detected the similarities!" . . .

JIM HABERSHAM, of the White House, cited a local bookseller who sought to borrow a hundred thousand dollars from a bank. "That's a lot of money," said the bank president. "Can you give me a statement?" "Yes," said the bookseller. "I'm optimistic." . . . Brentano's now operates the book department in the City of Paris, and because Sybil Bardshaw is the buyer, most visiting book peddlers go there first. . . . Across the way, I. Magnin is erecting a new department store that will be one of the largest in the country. . . . Ed Grabhorn, back in his printing shop after an unexplained visit to a dog show, asked me to believe he overheard a dowager inquire of the ticket-taker, "Do you know the way to the Labradors?" "Yas'm," answered the ticket-taker. "The gents' is in the basement; the ladies' down the hall on the right." . . .

THE PACIFIC COAST promises a rich harvest of future literary plums, and Doubleday, hoping to corral the lion's share, has established an elaborate and autonomous office on Powell Street. Howard Cady, formerly of Macmillan, the Stephen Daye Press, and the OSS, is in command, with Al Meyers the Number Two man, and Oscar Lewis and Stewart Holbrook as part-time scouts. Cady himself spends one week out of four in Hollywood. This team has proved a potent one. Fifteen books were signed up in the first four months; seven of them are on the fall Doubleday list. The first is Harriet Lane Levy's "920 O'Farrell Street." Others are the autobiography of Congressman Jerry Voorhis, and the ribald story of a lady medicine show alumnus called "Four White Horses and a Brass Band."

The authoress of "Four White Horses" first met Holbrook in the lobby of Seattle's leading hotel. "I'm tattooed from head to foot," she assured him. "Want to see for yourself?" It took Stewart and three bellboys to restrain her. Howard Cady says one of the more illuminating chapters of her book (due in October) tells how the carnival boys practised "painless" dentistry The approved method was to yank the tooth with the right hand, and wrap the left one so firmly around the victim's Adam's apple he couldn't even gurgle. If he hollered when the operation was concluded, the band drowned him out with "The Star Spangled Banner." . . .

MY LAST PARTY in San Francisco, before leaving for the desert and then for my office in New York (and high time too!) was at the Berkeley home of Joe and Charlotte Jackson. C. S. Forester was there, and Eudora Welty, Milla Logan, Mark Schorer, George Stewart, Jim Hart, John Bruce, Al Doering, most of the English department of the University of California, and a lot of other attractive people I never got around to meet. The space above the fireplace, however, was bare. A framed Chinese embroidery, highly prized by the Jacksons, had hung there for years. Its disappearance was a result of a visit by Irita Van Doren, editor of the *Herald-Tribune Books*, on her way to Japan.

Half of the town turned out to meet her, and Joe thought the occasion called for a roaring fire in the living room. Unfortunately, he forgot to open the damper. The wood in the fireplace was very dry, and the room was soon filled with suffocating smoke. "Water! Water!" cried the guests. Joe took an elaborate wind-up and caught the guest of honor head-on as she descended a staircase from her dressing room. Another volunteer pitched too high and drenched the Chinese embroidery. By the time the fire, not to mention the thirsts of the excited guests, had been quenched, several copies of Joe's latest anthology, "Continent's End" had floated into the kitchen on the crest of the tide.

Gump's, San Francisco's famed headquarters for oriental wares, undertook to restore the damaged treasure. "Be careful of it," begged Joe, "it's priceless." Gump's promised. I was back in New York when the burden of Gump's report reached me via sources I believe to be reliable. "In the first place," said Gump's to the Jacksons, "your priceless embroidery is worth about twelve dollars and fifty cents. In the second place, we regret to inform you that for the past fifteen years you have hung it upside down." BENNETT CERF.

"From where I sit"

WE'VE been having a lot of national weeks recently and with me this is no-politics-in-my-column week. I refuse to thumb my nose at red herrings and misinterpreters of Wallace. I have for you no great atomic message. There is one thing though—there are potentially some 90,000 of you readers of this magazine. Maybe a third of those read this column. If everyone who reads this column goes out and spends just $2.75 on a book called **Menagerie in F Sharp** by a magnificent humorist and musical genius named H. W. HEINSHEIMER (*Time* pronounces it Hynshymer), you will put this hard-working author on Easier Street.

Anyway, to resume, the text for this week's column is nonpolitical. In fact, it's very human. GERALD KERSH, **a rising English author (English authors** can rise on their own merits—American authors rise with their advertising budget) has written his third book, and it is called **Prelude To A Certain Midnight.**

Briefly it's the story of the Bar Bacchus in London. The bar is still there and so are some of the people that used to go there, but it isn't the same place. It just faded, that's all. But Mr. Kersh tells about its earlier heyday in language that is often sad, often riotous, but always accurate as if he were a foreign correspondent sent to record the doings of that distant nation, Humania.

The book is peopled by maniacs, burglars, whores, butlers, detectives, and society women in no particular order—in fact, a lot of disorder. The bar and the maze of London life somehow unites them, makes them a bouquet of flowers, some dead, some with thorns, some just drooping, but all flowers. On every page there is description that should be in a museum. KERSH writes about his people violently, befriending them and kershing them almost in the same breath, but always being around the place to see them bloom.

It's a sharp book and bitter. But you won't forget it in a hurry.

paul

DOUBLEDAY 50th Anniversary

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The gentle voices of ordinary people

YEARS AGO we counted among our friends a Japanese poet. Many times we watched him writing his poetry, inscribing the words with careful brush — delicate lines and bold strokes—on a long scroll of thin paper Then he would interpret the strangely fascinating symbols which made an intricate pattern of jet-black tracery. But when he read, translating into English, we thought: "How simple. These are words which anybody might use, irrespective of race, of background, of education. Ordinary words telling of ordinary things, but they are very moving."

And now, when time has blurred that friendship, a book, HORIZON IS CALLING by Taro Yashima, has brought back memories. In HORIZON IS CALLING, the pictures are drawn with economy of line, the text written with economy of word. Together they tell a simple and deeply moving story of how the author and his family strove to retain their ideals and integrity in a land increasingly dominated by fascist and imperialistic war lords. Here are poignancy and joy, despair and hope, courage and invincible faith, and, above all, integrity emerging unsoiled from dull, brutish oppression.

Taro Yashima is among those Japanese who, acutely aware that decency can survive only in freedom, came with his wife to this country in order to help save his own freedom by joining in democracy's battle against fascism. For fifteen years or more he has waged constant war against the evil forces which he, and men like him, knew would ultimately destroy Japan.

In his first book, THE NEW SUN, Yashima gave a dramatic picture of simple, unorganized people awakening to their responsibilities as human beings and patriots. Now, in HORIZON IS CALLING, he takes us into the small homes of those people who, in 1935, were coming more and more to realize that the continuity of their simple family lives was threatened with extinction by the imperialist lust for aggrandizement.

It is not such a far cry from Tokyo to Berlin. And the memory of a day in 1940, when we opened a newspaper and read that our poet was one of the Matsuoko mission to Berlin, has been vividly evoked by a book called BERLIN UNDERGROUND by Ruth Andreas-Friedrich.

Here again is a tale starting in 1938, of simple people who saw with bitter clarity to what abysmal doom Germany was being driven by her leaders, and who knew when war came that they must fight, not for the Nazis, but for Germany and the forces of decency which were fusing together across the world.

Like Taro Yashima, Mrs. Andreas-Friedrich and her friends were battling against suppression and persecution even before war engulfed their country. Many Jews who escaped the savage pogroms of the Nazis owe their safety to Mrs. Andreas-Friedrich and other gallant "Aryans", many of whom died that humanity might live.

With the outbreak of war, life for the resisting liberals became daily more precarious. Merely to live in Berlin through the awful days of World War II, particularly after the allied bombing offensive started, required the tightening of personal courage to an unimaginable degree. To stay there to the very end, for no other reward than the vindication of one's beliefs and the justification of one's endeavors, required a valor which is an essential part of sheer nobility and integrity. And such is the integrity of similar people the world over. Fundamentally they speak the same language. The gentle voices of ordinary people are speaking to us in simple words with the authority of experience. We cannot afford to close our ears.

HORIZON IS CALLING
By Taro Yashima
$3.50

BERLIN UNDERGROUND
By Ruth Andreas-Friedrich
Translated by Barrows Mussey
$3.00

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HENRY HOLT & COMPANY

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The Saturday Review of Literature

Non-Fiction and the Chromosomes

JOHN F. WHARTON

IF I UNDERSTAND you correctly," said the Publisher, "you're saying you won't write this book for us because you believe no writer of thoughtful non-fiction has any real influence on his readers. I'm going to try to persuade you to change your mind, because your position is quite a comment on a house that publishes as much serious non-fiction as we do."

"It's true, however," answered the Author. "While a dynamic personality, such as Willkie or Hitler, may still produce a book of far-reaching effect, the professional writer is becoming less and less effective."

"You're too modest."

"Rubbish; don't try to flatter me. For twenty-five years I've been writing on housing and slum clearance. The reviewers refer to me as 'the eminent authority' and 'the learned author.' And so far as I can see, it's been a waste of time. If any idea of mine has been taken up, I'm not aware of it."

"Don't you believe," asked the Publisher, "that the cumulative impact of books like yours has an effect? Nature, you know, fertilizes millions of seeds. Most of them are wasted, some grow up to only a few inches, yet, suddenly, one day, we realize we have a beautiful grove."

"That much I might concede," replied the Author, almost grimly. "But I'm tired of being one of a million almost useful seeds. Unless someone shows me at least a chance that I can produce some action, I prefer to rest on my oars and get some peace out of the rest of my life. But I don't know anyone who has even a theory."

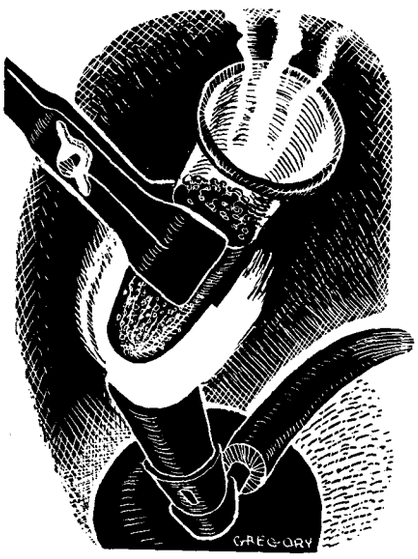
"I have a theory," said the Publisher.

The Author laughed. The Publisher was known to have theories on almost every subject.

A Picture of the Reader

The Publisher was quite unruffled.

"I start," he said, "by doing something which few writers of idea-articles ever seem to do. I construct a theoretical picture of the men and



women who might read such articles. That's a difficult task, and usually more or less unsatisfactory. But you have to start with some fixed assumptions. Have you ever heard of the chromosomes?"

"Vaguely. Aren't they the things that determine whether an embryo will turn out male or female?"

"Yes, but they determine much, much more than that. They determine whether you will have blue or brown eyes, long or short fingers. Vastly more important, the chromosomes contain the genes. And the genes determine whether you will have a strong or weak tendency to cruelty or kindness, anger or placidity, creativeness or destructiveness. In short, they set the stage for your whole personality."

"Come, come," broke in the Author, aggressively interested, "you're throwing environment out of the window. I can't go along with that."

"I didn't say the whole personality was set at birth. I said that the tendencies were set. Environment can affect those tendencies powerfully. A child with a strong tendency to cruelty, if brought up by Nazis, might well become the keeper of a concentration hell. The same child, brought up by you and your wife, might never perform any shocking *act*."

"All right," said the Author, "go back to your mysterious chromosomes."

The Magic of the Chromosomes

"Magical would be a better word. The genes and the chromosomes not only set the tendency of your personality; they have the power to impel you to carry it out. Just to make it still more breathtaking, the chromosomes work by deferred action in many cases. In a baby, the drive to get food and protection and to destroy anything which gets in the way is uppermost. After puberty the drive for reproduction asserts itself. At parenthood, the drive to protect and care for others makes an appearance in all normal men—for at least a short period. Other drives hardly ever become noticed until middle age. Apparently the gene can lie dormant for fifty years and then burst forth. As an overall generalization one might say you are driven to seek pleasure and avoid pain."

"I'll subscribe to that last statement," said the Author.

"However, you quickly learn that pleasure and pain are tricky things. A course which manifestly seems to open the road to pleasure suddenly turns into a dreary or regretted action, whereas some act which seems at first blush the negation of pleasure turns out to be the only way to avoid pain. Gradually a very important discovery dawns on you—one that all of us know but seem to try to forget as soon as we've learned it."

"What is that?"

"That from birth to death you are subjected to a mass of *conflicting* chromosome drives. Run down the list. The tendency to love or to hate, to satisfy your whims or to be admired for your self-control, to save your own skin or to be courageous—each has its contradictory counterpart.

"But even when you resolve these inner conflicts and proceed to act wholeheartedly, you bump into obstacles in the external world. You

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run into floods, earthquakes, excessive heat or cold. Yet these are trifles to the really great obstacle of the external world, which is other people proceeding to act wholeheartedly to accomplish some chromosome drive of their own with what resultant conflicts we know all too well."

"If I were a pessimist," said the Author, "I'd say that you have just proved that the human species is doomed."

"Don't distress so easily. The inner conflicts do get resolved, at least part of the time."

"How?"

The Structure of Y-O-U

"Look at it this way. In addition to the chromosome drives, you are born with a conscious will, a subconscious will, and the faculties of intellect, imagination, and memory. The exact interplay of these factors is, of course, only understood today in the vaguest way. In addition, somewhere, in every human being, there is a 'something' which is buffeted about by all these forces but also makes the final decision as to which of the conflicting forces will prevail at any given moment. Let's call that something 'you'; think of it as capital Y-O-U."

"I'm afraid you've lost me there," interjected the Author.

"Let's see if an illustration will help. Let's assume that in your childhood you were hungry one day and, wandering into the kitchen, suddenly saw a cake in a new, seemingly open box. A chromosome drive impelled you to reach out your hand to take it. Your hand bumped into a piece of clear glass, frustrating your purpose."

"At that point YOU—the capital Y-O-U—called on your intellect to solve the problem of how to get your hand on the cake. The intellect, in turn, probably first called on the memory. If you could consciously recall a similar situation, that might help solve this one. Let's assume memory was of no help here beyond recalling that boxes usually have lids. The intellect then impels the eyes and hands to look for a lid; they find it, but it seems to be locked. The imagination is then called into play; it supplements memorized facts and logical thought with creative inventiveness. The snaps which hold the lid are located and their purpose divined. By pushing, pulling, and twisting them—experimenting with them—the lid is released. A purposeful action has been accomplished by YOU."

"Um-m-m," replied the Author, "but that wasn't an inner conflict."

"I'm coming to that. When the lid is open, it suddenly becomes clear that the cake is of a type your mother has forbidden you to eat. Immediately an inner conflict between hunger, desire to obey, and fear of punishment is set up. The subsconcious will spurs you on to satisfy your hunger. The conscious will debates the value of obedience against the chance of being found out. Which of those desires will prove strongest depends on an interplay of conscious and subconscious factors, which, as I said, we only vaguely understand. But this much is clear. The child does take some action; you either took the cake, or walked away without taking it. Something inside of you finally made a decision; that 'something' is what I call 'YOU'."

"Wouldn't some people identify YOU with the will?"

"Probably, but that immediately involves you in some metaphysical questions I want to avoid. I'm not trying to philosophize. I'm constructing a chart for a non-fiction writer to use and I said I would try to do this by theorizing on the nature of the reader."

"Oh, yes, you were going to persuade me to write a book. When do we come to that?"

How Our Senses Work

"Pretty soon; but, first, you must decide on a theory of perception: how you see, hear, feel, taste, or smell anything."

"What has that got to do with it?"

"Plenty. If you have no conception of what happens when a reader's eyes focus on a printed page, you're at a great disadvantage in trying to keep them focused there."

"I hadn't thought of that. What does happen?"

"Let's start with the act of vision in a general way. The first big step in constructing a modern theory of vision is to realize that objects in the external world have no meaning by themselves."

"Whoa," said the Author. "That doesn't sound modern to me. It sounds like old-fashioned Berkleyism:—the external world only exists in our mind. The universe would not exist if there were no beings to perceive it."

"I didn't say it didn't exist," said the Publisher, patiently. "I said it had no meaning for us. Of course a brick, for example, exists even if no one from this day on will ever be conscious of it. Let me try to put it another way.

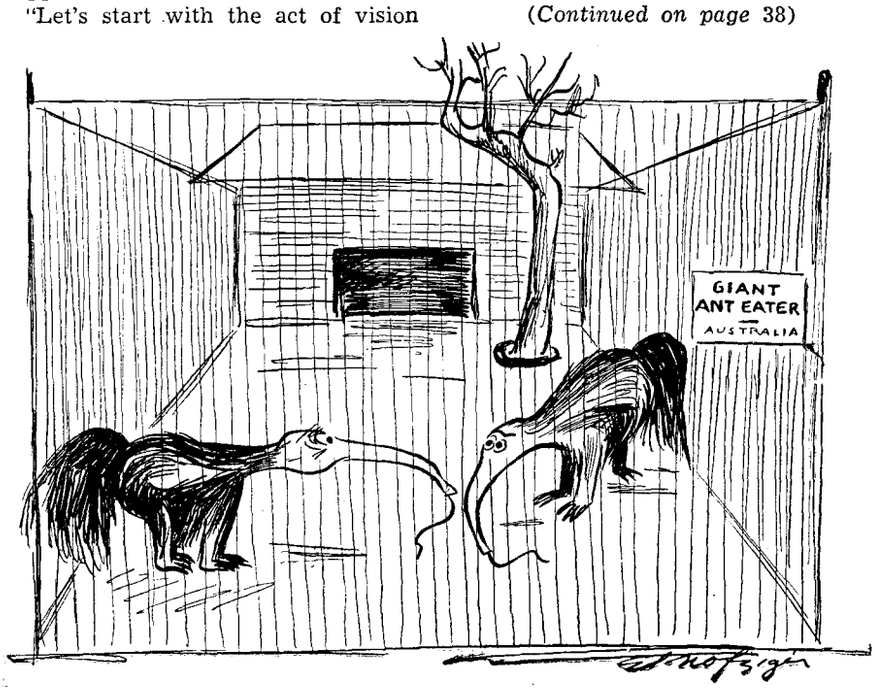
"When we believed that an external object such as a brick, for example, had an inherent meaning, it naturally followed that we believed it conveyed that meaning to every normal eye which rested on it. We now know that isn't so. Probably no two people 'see' the same brick exactly the same way. Fortunately most of us see enough alike so that when I ask you to toss me that paperweight, you'll know what I mean and not toss me the inkwell. But if each of us could accurately reproduce our sensation of an object, there would be some tiny measurable variation."

"What of it, if it doesn't affect our actions?"

"Ah, but it does. Look, the minute you understand that vision is a dual process, and that part of the act is what the viewer brings to it, you must realize that the same printed words *can* mean one thing to one person and something else to another person.

"Now most authors assume that if they write grammatical sentences con-

(*Continued on page* 38)



"Do you think D.D.T. will eventually replace us?"

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"The American Problem"

KINGSBLOOD ROYAL. By Sinclair Lewis. New York: Random House. 1947. 348 pp. $3.

Reviewed by CLIFTON FADIMAN

PEOPLE who have come to expect the surprising from Sinclair Lewis will not be disappointed in "Kingsblood Royal." It is the best conversation-starter since Hiroshima, and will do far more good. It will arouse fury, indignation, resentment, passion, and, above all, thought. Also it will make many reflective Americans feel a swelling pride in the courage of this irate countryman of theirs, with his unwillingness to let rottenness rot comfortably, his ironical patriotism that makes him scourge the land he so deeply loves, and his readiness — rare among writers — to say simple things so simply that no one dare misunderstand. I have, like many others, taken a crack at Mr. Lewis whenever his books fell short of my expectations; and, truth to tell, I do not precisely know how "good" "Kingsblood Royal" is. But I do know how it makes me feel. In these shuffling days of fear, evasion, and retreat, when money and reputation are being made out of the careful manipulation of hatred, I am glad that Sinclair Lewis is alive and in there pitching.

This, his twentieth novel, is about the same fellow we met in his early ones: the exhaustlessly interesting, inordinately dull, frighteningly nonspeculative, gloriously potential Average American. Do not believe that this is just another novel about the Negro Problem. It is not about the Negro Problem. It is about the American Problem. It comprises one paragraph of one chapter of that long, perhaps interminable book which chronicles our ridiculous and noble attempt to become the free and rational people described in the Declaration, the Consititution, the Gettysburg Address, and similar Utopian documents. Only incidentally is it about "blacks" and "whites." (As these terms have no scientific meaning whatsoever I shall hereafter put them in quotes.)

Neil Kingsblood is tall, handsome, red-headed, a Baptist, popular with his neighbors, and an assistant cashier of the Second National Bank of Grand Republic, Minnesota, population 90,000. If Sinclair Lewis had only let him alone, he would have become a Success—which means getting to be a bank president without anything unpleasant happening to him, and then dying. This standard Neil has a standard house, a standard attractive wife, a standard delightful four-year-old daughter. So much for Neil when we first meet him. When we take leave of him this pillar of American society is busy defending his life against the attacks of his neighbors. Why? Because his skin contains a minute, invisible trace of an unimportant chemical substance called melanin.

What has happened is that Neil, in the course of some semi-playful research into his family tree, discovers that on his mother's side he is descended from Xavier Pic. Xavier Pic was one of the iron-hearted pioneers without whom this country could not have been settled, without whom you and I could never have owned a deep freeze unit or a radio. However, Xavier Pic, it develops, was "black" —and that makes Neil Kingsblood one thirty-second Negro.

Following this discovery the bewildered, horrified Neil may elect one of three courses. One, he may bury his knowledge deep in his subconscious. This is what many will quite plausibly argue he would have done. Two, he may choose to remain "white" and relieve his guilt-feelings by working for the Negroes as well as he can within the dominant community. This is what many will say he should have done. Three, he may announce his discovery to Grand Republic and the universe, and take the consequences. This is what Mr. Lewis —who, being no fool, knows what kind of situation will produce a novel people will want to read—says he did do. Either you accept this as a kind of convention, as Charles Lamb did the immorality of Restoration Comedy, or you don't. If you don't, you'll be passing up a narrative that has plenty of the old Lewis zingo and cleansing acridity and restless invention—and a certain amount, too, of not-too-believable dialogue, shaky motivation, and blunt-instrument irony over which a *New Yorker* editor would shake his head regretfully.

What is "Kingsblood Royal" about? In a note on his book Mr. Lewis writes:

> He would be a heroic man who should dare to say publicly that dogs are frequently nuisances and loving mothers sometimes talk too much. Never, never would I venture even to suggest either of these violent thoughts, and perhaps next to them in peril is to suggest that a final and complete solution of all racial questions is to hint that maybe Negroes are nothing more nor less than human beings.

That is the shattering discovery that Neil, the peak of "white," Protestant, Anglo-Saxon culture, makes as he wanders among the variously-tinted citizens of the Five Points. He visits Dr. Evan Brewster's Baptist Church and sits down between two colored people, "and they seemed to

THE AUTHOR: Nobody thought "Old Doc Lewis's" son Harry Sinclair, called "Doodle," would amount to much when he was a teenage hotel night clerk in Sauk Centre, Minn. Neither did editors of the local *Weekly, New Haven Journal-Courier,* AP, and San Francisco *Bulletin,* who fired him as an incompetent reporter. But—awkward, freckled, red-haired—he could spin yarns with the vocal endurance of a tobacco auctioneer. At Yale, considerably more socialist than social, he wrote verse and edited the *Lit,* then stoked furnaces for Upton Sinclair's Helicon Hall. He lived in New York's "gashouse" district and the Bronx, free-lancing and doing social work, was reporter for the Waterloo, Ia., *Courier,* secretary for two lady writers in Carmel, Calif., helped edit a magazine for the deaf in Washington, D. C., sold stories and articles. From 1914-1919 he wrote five forgotten novels. With "Main Street," in 1920, he won fame. "Babbitt," two years later, added to his stature. Both increased America's vocabulary. "Elmer Gantry," Pulitzer-award "Arrowsmith" (he refused), "Dodsworth," "Ann Vickers," and "It Can't Happen Here" followed, as did others less notable. He became first American Nobel Prize winner in 1930. He's been married, and divorced, twice, first to Grace Hegger, then Dorothy Thompson. One of his two sons, Wells (for H.G.), was killed in the war. Michael, a tall lad, is still in school. Whether working or playing, his energy is atomic. Stagestruck, but no Barrymore, he trouped with "Our Town" in the Frank Craven role, keeping audiences from their powder puffs and cokes during intermissions with war-news commentaries. He may write a play next. A stalwart, but sometimes a difficult friend, "Red" Lewis is still insatiably curious—still full of vinegar and evangelism.

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him very much like people." He discovers that all Negroes do not necessarily have beautiful voices, extraordinary sexual powers, a natural sense of rhythm, or a liking for fried chicken. Some are dirty, some clean, many ugly, many handsome. When they are rich enough to afford proper hygienic facilities and decent food, they smell quite pretty, just like you and me. When they are poor and improperly nourished, they do not. Belfreda Lewis is a malicious tart; Sophia Concord might be a John Marquand heroine: both are "black." Drexel Greenshaw, the colored headwaiter who looks like a Senator, is an Uncle Tom; Ryan Woolcape is a furious racialist who stands in bad need of an education: both are "black." A few have minds that Senator Taft would fall in love with—or whatever is the Senator's equivalent for such a passion; a few have minds that Earl Browder would admire; the majority resemble any "white" American majority. Some of them suffer, as "whites" do, from race pride, and with as little reason. They're provincial, like your neighbors, most of them. But, from time to time, they throw up an Ash Davis, who would feel quite at home in a good Parisian salon, and uncomfortably superior on Park Avenue.

All these people want is to be treated as if they were human. Still, from one point of view, that is a great deal. "Neil learned that whenever a well-meaning white asks, 'Wouldn't the Negroes be satisfied with —' the answer is *No*." Those "whites" who argue for slavery can construct a certain hard-boiled, Spenglerian, Make-Way-For-the-American-Century case. Those who argue for equality can construct a case too. But it is too late for those who argue in-between.

The Negroes, not all of them, but an increasing number, simply want to be Americans. They don't want to be loved or admired or feared or "tolerated." They want to be Dr. Kennicott and Babbitt and Elmer Gantry and Arrowsmith and Gideon Planish and Ann Vickers and Dodsworth and Neil Kingsblood—for that is what they are in essence, no more and no less. They have no special virtues and no special vices except those transient and superficial ones that the "whites" have, without knowing it, forced them to develop.

Of course, we nice, comfortable, liberal "white" folk know all this—but do we? What Mr. Lewis forces us to see is that we know it only with our minds, not with our hearts and our visions. The bewildered, enraged, enraptured, scared Neil Kingsblood is the little invention that he uses in

order that we may see with the inward eye.

I said a few paragraphs back that this is not a book about the Negro Problem, but about the American Problem. That is true. It is a book about one of the obstacles we place in the way of our becoming very American and very great. Mr. Lewis may wax a trifle sentimental—though he tries hard not to—over his intellectual Woolcapes and saintly Brewsters and cultured Davises; but he is not in the least sentimental when his eyes fix on the "whites"—on Rod Aldwick (Princeton and Harvard) who is nothing but a small Hitler with good manners; or on Neil's father, Dr. Kenneth Kingsblood, who flies into hysteria when the Great Revelation is made; or on Neil's boss, Mr. Prutt; or on dozens of others, who might have been reasonably decent, reasonably indecent, reasonably good, reasonably wicked Americans, were they not eaten up by their lack of confidence in themselves. For hatred of race—or of class—is but a sign of lack of self-confidence, and the urge to lynch and torture is the only way in which that sign can fully manifest itself.

Hence it is the tragedy of the "*whites*" of Grand Republic with which Mr. Lewis is concerned. It is we who, by our senseless fears, our unwillingness to face the simple, unexciting truth that all men are equal in their mongrel-ness, are making of ourselves a technically superior but emotionally and morally inferior race.

Not that this book is a moral sermon. Far from it. Mr. Lewis is less concerned, I think, to point out the ethical turpitude of race prejudice, than its everlasting, howling *dulness*. Race prejudice makes dullards out of both "whites" and "blacks." It involves them in endless, futile conversations and arguments. It wastes their spiritual and economic energy. Theoretically, it will produce in the end a nation, like the Germans, of crashing *bores*, obsessed by a single idea, and that a false one. Mr. Lewis does not believe that Americans, in many ways the finest and most vigorous people on earth, will care to slide into this universal boredom punctuated by those voluptuous thrills supplied by the whip, the fire, and the gas chamber. Because he does not believe it, he has written "Kingsblood Royal" as a warning. Because you and I do not believe it, we will read "Kingsblood Royal" and by it we will be warned.

In Memoriam: Brian Hooker

By Leonard Bacon

THE dogwood branch
  In the woods of Lyme
Will bud and blanch
  In its due time.

But the man who thought
  In poetry
And mocked and taught
  Is lost to me.

We cannot prove
  What he pursued
In the rhythm of
  His solitude.

Clear, recondite,
  Gentle, hard-bitten,
He would not write
  What he might have written.

Yet the gust Tyrtaean
  Was in the man,
Epicurean
  Puritan.

His dream was denied,
  But this redeemed it.
He was satisfied
  Because he had dreamed it.

Fortune withdrew.
  He laughed as she went
Delivered to
  His strange content.

We know his hand
  Might well have shaped
More than he planned,
  But he escaped

Over a lone
  Star-stricken sea
Where nothing's known
  But mystery

And never comber
  Shall overwhelm
His ship with Homer
  At the helm.

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On the Longest Front in History

THE SIDE OF THE ANGELS. By Robert McLaughlin. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1947. 369 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by JOHN WOODBURN

MR. McLAUGHLIN, who not long ago made clear his angelic allegiance in a book of short stories called "A Short Wait Between Trains," has now published his first novel, which is also about two wars, and which reiterates and elaborates upon the indignation and warning which were implicit in the first book. The two wars I refer to are the one which was technically brought to a close two years ago, and the one which is still going on, going great guns, with no armistice in sight.

The antagonists in this second war, which is being fought in civilian clothes in hotels, bar-rooms, drawing-rooms, and on public conveyances on what might be called the longest front in history, are easily recognizable. On the one side, which I choose to designate as the enemy, are the men and women, many of whom have been breveted as Ladies and Gentlemen, who, prevented by the accident of birth from claiming racial kinship with the Nazarene Christ, nevertheless paradoxically, self-consciously, snobbishly, and incorrectly call themselves Christians, thereby demonstrating an interesting connotation between anti-Semitism and anti-semanticism. Their major offensive, and that is the word for it, consists largely in carefully nourishing racial intolerance through the moth-eaten anecdote, usually sexual-economic, told with an approximation of a Jewish or Negro accent, and in the apparent conviction that the mantle of Whistler has fallen upon them. Some of these people know what they are doing and I am afraid of them. The others, the ones who might be called the mercenaries—because all they are in it for is the compensations of prestige and the feeling of superiority it seems to give them to combine cruelty with bad taste—they are the ones whose friends defend them as "thoughtless," and I am beginning to be scared of them, too. There was a time in this war when I tried to take prisoners, to shoot, but only to crease them with sweet reason, and I tried to get them to desert to my, the angel's, side by dropping patient, conversational *feuilletons* over their lines, but not any more. Now that I've seen what they have done and are doing, I give no quarter. I insult on sight.

On the angelic side, where Robert McLaughlin is, and not nearly enough others, there are the angry, frightened

"As a fighter on the side of the angels Robert McLaughlin has won his wings."

ones who believe that there are a great many different kinds of people in a world but that only one kind can survive in a fascist state; who feel that that other war I mentioned is lost as long as there is a restricted community in America or anywhere else, as long as the word "jew" is used as a verb and "white only" is used as a warning, as long as the category of "religion" or "race" appears on scholastic or employment questionnaires.

Tom Egan, the hero of "The Side of the Angels," who says what he and Robert McLaughlin think, is a decent, likable, morally courageous young GI who, unfortunately from a literary point of view—so deep and urgent are the author's convictions—occasionally becomes the simple instrument of the novel's thesis. He sometimes seems to me to move so far over on the side of the angels that he steps out of the ranks. This is a very tricky criticism to make, I admit, since I would undoubtedly admire greatly in life what I am complaining about in a character in a book. Still, I felt that, and so I am saying it. On the other hand, Tom's elder brother, Clark, a cynical, opportunistic, superficially charming and disarming advertising man who has entered the OCC, thereby transferring the techniques of one agency to another, achieves a crescendo of contemptibility. This is, of course, a simple, effective device for Mr. McLaughlin's thesis, which is Good *vs.* Evil, but while it strengthens the theme, it tends to weaken the novel as a literary performance. Because I am so wholeheartedly in agreement with what the author has to say, I would not so much wish that this material be subordinated or sweetened in any way, but that the other elements in this novel be given parallel attention and stature.

In the main the conflict is between the two brothers, a conflict of ideas and ideals which culminates in a final, irremediable turning from each other. Tom, before he goes overseas, has fallen in love with a spirited, aggressive Jewish girl named Rodia Martin, and it is this reality which crystallizes into angry action the liberal theories he has held before.

There are other characters, very good ones, searchingly, sharply, sympathetically drawn, which serve as counterpoint: a tired general Van Leuvan, too old and too thoughtful to find war the brilliant game he had once thought it; Milan Dankovic, the young immigrant who is parachuted back into his native Balkan mountains to meet dreary death; Edwards, the sardonic Southerner who waits in a villa in Naples, AWOL, to test his unwanted courage on the MP's; Margulies, the Jewish soldier who got tired of taking it all the time; and General Cavanaugh, who could see the dome of the White House over the hills of Italy. But I wish these had been more integrated into the architecture of this novel, were less passers-by in its action.

Robert McLaughlin, the jacket tells me, received his commission as lieutenant at Edgewood Arsenal, but as a fighter on the side of the angels he has won his wings.

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT: No. 205

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 205 *will be found in the next issue.*

OLD ARDENT BPGFL, OLDC

TPC, HLDE XED OLRDA QXKT

PEXOLDQ.

TRQ HPBODQ TSXOO—

RMPELXD

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 204

To conquer without danger is to triumph without glory.
PIERRE CORNEILLE.

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Burdens of a Joyless Life

THE TIN FLUTE. By Gabrielle Roy. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, Inc. 1947. 315 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by
CATHERINE MEREDITH BROWN

FRENCH - CANADIAN Gabrielle Roy in her first novel has turned from the literature of the murmuring pines, of the vast, snowy, western plains, and of the ancient Canada in favor of the slum section of Montreal. In the quarter of Saint Henri, permanent squalor and a ceaseless struggle for subsistence are the accepted burdens of a joyless life. Man is assuredly born to sorrow here. The pressures of the day—facing up to the mechanics of living, hoping against hope for a final home—consume all energy. The fight for survival is so constant, so fierce, that emotion, tenderness, and time for comprehension are curtailed to the point of nonexistence. There are, of course, passion and unending pregnancy, but this only means pain and the proverbial extra mouth.

In "The Tin Flute" we are told of these conditions much as a social worker might report them. Only intermittently do we get the gaunt smell of poverty, the terrible sense of despair. Perhaps Miss Roy chooses to leave us cold, chooses to understress, but one cannot help wanting to respond, almost hoping for some torment.

Our concern is with the Lacasse family. Rose-Anna, mother of eleven, careworn and capable, labors uninterruptedly while husband, Azarius, loses job after job. The eldest child, Florentine, a beautiful girl of nineteen, gives her all to the family as a waitress in the Woolworth restaurant. She falls in love with a wretched, cruel character who leaves her life as she discovers she is pregnant. Fortunately, there always seems to be another beau available for purposes of matrimony, ignorant, guileless, and good. Florentine gets a husband who promptly goes off to war, leaving her rich with a last name and a soldier's pay.

The war emerges as the final salvation to Azarius, too. For the first time he feels proudly employed, useful, a man eager to test his manhood. This evil is big; he can set aside gnawing petty demands and embark on a colossal foe, leaving Rose-Anna with her twelfth baby born the day her son Daniel dies.

In this six-year-old child, ridden with leukemia, yearning for a toy tin flute, and finally relinquishing even his desire in utter resignation, there is real expression, the glimmer of the book's meat. Miss Roy writes with sudden streaks of loveliness throughout, but she is consistently careful with Daniel.

—*Annette and Basil Zarov.*

Only intermittently does Gabrielle Roy create "the gaunt smell of poverty, the terrible sense of despair."

Hannah Josephson is responsible for the somewhat uneven translation. The reader is conscious of another language, aware of the quest for the right word. But proper phrasing alone would not arouse the pity Miss Roy must wish us to feel.

Frank Water's settings "are so powerfully plausible that they are sometimes almost nauseating."

Next Door to Nirvana

THE YOGI OF COCKROACH COURT. By Frank Waters. New York: Rinehart & Co. 1947. 275 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by PHIL STONG

THIS fantastic tale is not the invention of some imitator of Allen Smith or Bob Benchley; it is the grim and sordid but engaging story of a little old Chinese Buddhist whose "karma" has inconsiderately landed him in the proprietorship of a slop shop in the vilest section of a Mexican border town, the Plaza of Cucarachas. Tai Ling is rather pleased than otherwise at the extremity to which his various incarnations have finally subjected him—the complexity of his problems indicates that this must be nearly the final trial of all the centuries. If he can show sufficient worth, he must be approaching Nirvana—the final blending of his spark of spirit with the knowing that includes the known—to which all inferior realities are the illusions of inferior knowledge.

Tai Ling is the principal character, but one of the least in his own story. The moving characters are a young half-breed without discipline of any kind, and his chosen sweetheart, a dancer-prostitute in the town. These are the protegés of Tai Ling, and since he is well along on his karma it is obvious that he must be tested by his treatment of these two people who are not very well along on theirs, though they have advanced as far as human semblance.

The story of Barby and Guadalupe moves in the stench of a polyglot Mexican slum of cantines, bordellos, and the cellars of diseased beggars, with jealousies and violence, and perhaps too much insistence on physical candor, till the incipient gang-leader, Darby, meets his cheap and inevitable fate and the brown Guadalupe uses her instinctive Lesbianism as a vehicle for her unrealized selfishness. Definitely uncompleted karmas—unfortunate—a few more ages.

The happy ending is when Tai Ling finds with drastic emphasis that he is at last worthy of Nirvana.

The settings, human and circumstantial, are so powerfully plausible that they are sometimes almost nauseating but, of course, they are necessary to the crucifixion with which the Yogi's discipline is tested. Nothing disagreeable to him is left out of his torture, but the old man is so well conditioned in "Ten Things to Forget" and "The Fifteen Weaknesses" that his essence always rises above disasters without impairing his humanity, a responsibility of his karma.

A strange book, occasionally uneven in writing, but excellently balanced between the great theme and the strong suspense of its episodes.

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From Altar-Boy to Killer

KNOCK ON ANY DOOR. By Willard Motley. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co. 1947. 509 pp. $3.

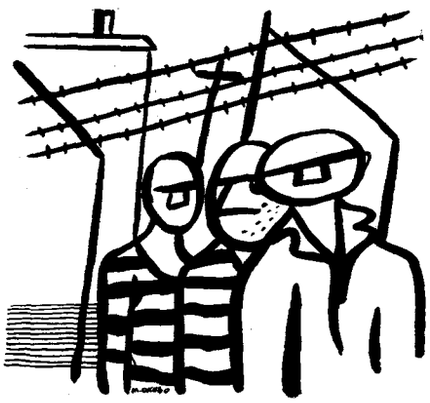
Reviewed by MARGARET B. HEXTER

DISCERNING readers were much intrigued a couple of years ago by an unusual book, "Rebel Without a Cause," by a psychiatrist, Robert M. Lindner, the transcript of an actual hypno-analysis of a criminal psychopath. A far larger body of readers will doubtless be attracted to "Knock on Any Door," a novel which is, to all intents and purposes, the biography of an imaginary criminal psychopath. If Mr. Lindner's work had much of the readability of fiction, Mr. Motley's has much of the veracity of science.

Nick Romano, the son of decent, devout, lower middle-class Italian-Americans, was a lovable and sensitive small boy, devoted to his parents, his older brother and sister, his adoring aunt, and—not least—to the priest whom he assisted at Sunday mass. Nick Romano at twenty-two dies in the electric chair for the murder of a policeman. In 500 pages, of which not one is dull and many are calculated to make the heart beat faster, Mr. Motley traces the transformation from altar-boy to killer.

It begins when Romano, senior, loses his small business in the depression, and the family moves to a slum district. Nostalgic for the lost decencies of early childhood, rebuffed by incomprehension both at home and at school, young Nick falls in with a neighborhood gang, and rather than squeal on the friend to whom he has transferred his deepest affection, he "takes the rap" and lands in a reformatory. He leaves it completely brutalized, and in full rebellion against society. From that time forth, except for an occasional flicker, which, either consciously or unconsciously he soon extinguishes, his better instincts are as good as dead. Meanwhile the family, still barely able to keep afloat, has moved to Chicago, and it is in the slums and the underworld of that city that the rest of Nick's tragedy is played out. The incorrigible delinquent of the teeming Hull House neighborhood soon becomes the inveterate petty criminal—gambler, mugger, thief, dope-runner, pimp, prostitute, and blackmailer of Chicago's lower West Madison Street.

Only once in the course of Nick's rebellion against society is there the faintest chance of his regeneration. When in his late teens he falls in love with and marries a decent girl who adores him, he makes an effort to go straight. A foredoomed effort, for after a few weeks of trying to earn an honest living, he returns to his old haunts and his old vices. He loved Emma as much as he was capable of



loving anybody, but his old pattern was too fixed for her to change it, and long before a normal honeymoon would have been over he was not only unfaithful to her but hopelessly impotent with her. Yet it is the guilt that overwhelms him when Emma kills herself that precipitates him into greater and yet more dangerous crimes, culminating in the shooting of the police officer whom he has long regarded as the incarnation of society. The final third of the book—the murder, the chase, the trial, the electrocution—have an excitement that is at times almost unbearable.

"Knock on Any Door" naturally invites comparison with "Native Son." For this reader, at any rate, the comparison is all in favor of the newer work. Not only is Nick Romano a far more complex and more winning protagonist than Bigger Thomas, but the minor characters (although in Mr. Motley's book, too, they serve as little more than foils to the central figure) have a credibility lacking to many of Mr. Wright's. Mr. Motley is perhaps even more successful than Mr. Wright in persuading the reader that the criminal was the victim of society before becoming its foe, because he is so much less savage in his indictment.

Even so, there will be many who will question whether he has fully made his case. It is difficult to believe that there will be any to question his mastery of the novelist's art. "Knock on Any Door" is a triumph of naturalistic fiction. The only question is whether in this phenomenal first novel Mr. Motley has given us his all, or whether a major luminary has just arisen in the literary firmament.

Your Literary I.Q.

SCRAMBLED BEST SELLERS

By Howard Collins

Phillip W. Haberman, Jr., of New York City, submits twenty-five more book and author anagrams. All are best sellers: some current, some recent, some not quite so recent. Unscrambling half of them in two hours is par, twenty is excellent, and all of them stamp you as a genius. Answers on page 30.

1. Rhombelt of Slothwell	Theremin Wangsey
2. The Smith of Belleclare	Jelly Ann Suers
3. Dean Thigge	Matt B. D. Coaldney
4. Barmore Fever	Kleo R. Swinethan
5. Trooly Swab, or Greek Inn	B. Y. Hemstitt
6. Ode in Fecamp	John Alibu Ames
7. A Tree Mints	Willis Carnies
8. Ay, Daily Bile!	Ten Broek Snerth
9. When He Wit Not Dig	Rachel Mittlegram
10. That Man's Far Tanner	Jas. Hodson Poss
11. Oo La La, Tempt No Women!	Helmath Lins
12. Prepot	Tishmen Roth
13. The War of Graspeth	Kenneth Jicobs
14. Gustahf Berd	Juan Q. Promhand
15. S'Death, Sir Bediver, Die!	Helen Wugvay
16. Hot If Th' Tongue	J. van Latin
17. Dunce Rover	Joy H. Snarlcrqon
18. Near Seed	Mac Jasmine
19. The Case of Jognak	Gresham Siclen, Jr.
20. Hobo Swat	Fred Benear
21. A Toad-Hooker Bow	Errol T. Mermaid
22. Short Lozino	John Maltesi
23. Dismic Topology	T. R. Crossbottle
24. Laura, A Cadgin' Lady	Garrick E. St. Radish
25. Work Is N. G.	Hyman Lee Blarn

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Post-War Life in Barsetshire

PEACE BREAKS OUT. By Angela Thirkell. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1947. 370 pp. $2.50.

Reviewed by PAMELA TAYLOR

AN ARTIST wishing to paint an allegorical figure of Peace in 1947 would be hard put to it; were he to settle for the familiar dove - and - olive - branch the bird would, undoubtedly, have to be moulting, the branch bare of leaf or fruit.

The peace which breaks over Mrs. Thirkell's lovingly chronicled Barsetshire families is equally dilapidated. Just as war was for them, in the previous novels, more a question of annoyance and patient contriving than horror and privation, so peace is almost frustration—the commission nearly won, the skimping and making-do prolonged. Peace has failed to come as a great, dramatic climax; even its announcement is confused, its celebration aggravating as all the bakers are closed.

If Mrs. Thirkell's legions of admirers have worried lest a Brave New World alter or disturb her county families they may relax and enjoy this new story as usual. Life goes on much as before in village and close (Mrs. Thirkell is, to my knowledge, the only English novelist who has dared to draw a Bishop universally disliked), bazaars are held, tennis matches arranged, house parties achieved.

Lady Graham is quite as beautiful and brainless as ever, and, despite her five bouncing children, is surrounded (balm to all middle-aged readers) by various infatuated young men. Miss Bunting's memory is green in the hearts of her pupils and her lessons, well-learned, provide an aptness in literary quotation or recognition which apparently makes an excellent substitute for family connections.

There are no unfortunate marriages in Mrs. Thirkell's excellently managed pages. The sophisticate may toy with the idea of marrying the innocent young girl, but in the end he wisely settles for equal sophistication, the gentle young man wins an equally gentle wife, interests are matched and family trees even more so. In her deft way she achieves happy endings for three young men, all of whom have appeared before in various books: David, the eccentric Lady Emily's son (and Miss Bunting's favorite pupil), Robin Dale, who lost a foot in the war, and Martin Leslie, Lady Emily's grandson.

When problems and grim realities confront us on every side, it is perhaps ungrateful to complain of such undemanding entertainment. Yet at the risk of seeming captious, a plea is entered for a new field for Mrs. Thirkell's delicious and penetrating talents. She has now evolved such a well-recorded circle that there are no surprises left. The non-sequitur (of which she is undoubtedly the most ingenious creator); the old lady who never gets to her feet but in a landslide of impedimenta; the innocent and beautiful young women, or the hearty and wholesome ones, still, figuratively at least, brandishing their hockey sticks; the gallant young men, the equally gallant older ones, bungling a bit but adroitly managed by their wives; the snobberies of the servants' hall, the lower classes who may be kind, courageous, or difficult but who may never, never escape from their vulgarity—Mrs. Thirkell has drawn them all so neatly that one almost feels she is playing with stock figures from a kind of Pollock's Penny Plain and Tuppence Colored Children's Theatre. They may be manipulated into different positions but they never vary. And, too, she has developed a style which, while (deceptively) easy and confidential, has now become so involved that it verges on tea-table conversation with an elderly, delightful, but just faintly tedious aunt.

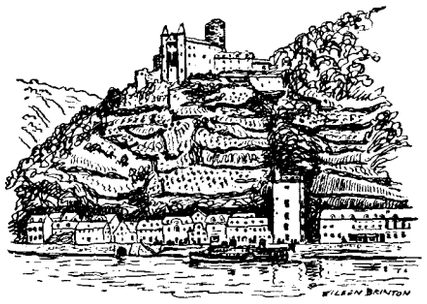
The Ageless Fight

THE GIRL AND THE FERRYMAN. By Ernst Wiechert. New York: Pilot Press, Inc. 1947. 206 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by ROBERT PICK

THIS novel, originally published, if my memory serves me right, in the early thirties, is a simple enough story. Jürgen Doskocil, a ferryman on an East Prussian river, has buried an unfaithful wife. For a while he carries on alone and keeps to himself, until fate delivers Marte at his doorstep. Like many of their fellow villagers, Marte and her father have come under the spell of a foreign missionary, a Mr. Maclean, who has arrived from Salt Lake City—the "Golden City"—with the promise of bliss and prosperity. Marte and her father have sold their property and are waiting for the emigrants' ship to take them overseas to that Eden. In the meantime Maclean is amusing himself with the girls of the hamlet. He fiercely resents Marte's growing attachment to Jürgen and her subsequent marriage to the hardworking, taciturn man who has withstood the lure of his mission.

And suddenly the reader, having followed what thus far seemed a simple tale of rural life in an austere, forlorn, windswept landscape, finds himself in the very midst of drama and tragedy. The fight is on. It is not a fight between the lecherous clergyman and Jürgen, but between Maclean and the illiterate girl herself. It is a battle whose ironically happy ending Ernst Wiechert recounts with mounting tension until a great peace descends on his troubled characters. It is no other than the eternal fight between good and evil. One may dismiss the subject as an old one; it will, alas, never age. One may also dismiss Mr. Maclean as an altogether incredible villain. Like Mr. Penhallow, the vicious clergyman of Pierre Andrézel's "The Angelic Avengers," he is not an immoral, greedy felon posing as a minister; he *is* a minister—the passionate missionary of the creed of evil. With Hitler's full record before his eyes, who can deny that such a creed does indeed exist, as do its preachers?



Compared with their vociferous sermons, Wiechert's voice is a small one, subdued, plain, and even somewhat thin and timid at times. Yet Dr. Goebbels feared it, forbade the author's writings, and had him put into the Dachau concentration camp, despite the fact that here was a German writer of stature who also happened to be an artist after his own heart.

With a few strokes Wiechert admirably paints a winter night on the frozen river, the miracle of a young field, or the nocturnal converse of a man and a woman who love each other. Coming belatedly out of the caldron of German life and German writing, his voice is among the best that remain. Though he has done more ambitious books, Jürgen Doskocil's softly-told story will introduce his creator to American readers, and win him friends.

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Case for Calculated Economy

TAXATION FOR PROSPERITY. By Randolph E. Paul. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1947. 418 pp. $4.

Reviewed by PAUL M. O'LEARY

TAXATION is traditionally regarded as a dull, even a dismal subject, especially when treated by "experts." But Randolph Paul's book is neither dull nor dismal though Mr. Paul is definitely an expert in the subject about which he writes. His long and successful experience as a private tax lawyer and a Federal official concerned with taxes (he was general counsel of the Treasury and tax adviser to the Secretary of the Treasury during the recent war) have steeped him in an amazingly wide range of knowledge about the American federal tax system without dulling a bright and scintillating mind. He writes clearly and with verve. He has wit and irony as Beardsley Ruml will discover when he reads Chapter Thirteen on the Ruml Plan and Current Tax Payment. But he writes from a sober, serious point of view, and with a sense of real urgency, about the importance of trying to influence the course of action in the field of federal taxation during the years ahead.

"Taxation for Prosperity" is written in three parts: "Taxation in Retrospect," covering the development of the federal tax system from 1893 through 1945, "Problems of Future Tax Policy," and "A Federal Tax System for the Future." For most readers the first part, being the least technical, will have the greatest appeal. Certainly its chapters on war finance, Chapters Ten through Seventeen, pack into 125 pages an intensely interesting "inside view" of a unique and vastly important period in American history. Mr. Paul was general counsel of the Treasury during much of this period and no man, not even the Secretary himself, played a more important role in trying to get Congress to enact tax legislation adequate to the fundamental needs of the times. Much of what he writes here is consequently "source material" for future students of the period. Naturally the Treasury and the President come off much better than the Congress in Mr. Paul's discussion of the Revenue Act of 1943. This was the act passed over President Roosevelt's stinging veto by a Congress led by "Dear Alben" Barkley, who had

—*Justus in the* Minneapolis Star.

The Fight Against Inflation

in his own words "carried the flag of this Administration for seven years over rougher territory than was ever traversed by any previous majority leader." Mr. Paul is probably too uncritical of the $10,500,000,000 tax bill which the Administration had requested of Congress at that time. But no one could be too hard on the monstrously inadequate bill which was vetoed by President Roosevelt and passed over his veto. The President called it "not a tax bill but a tax-relief bill providing relief not for the needy but for the greedy." Mr. Paul implies that these harsh words were the President's own carefully chosen words, not the words of Judge Rosenman or Justice Byrnes.

But the weakness of the 78th Congress, while primarily responsible for the eventual breakdown of the whole anti-inflation program, should not blind us to the unfortunate fact that the Treasury itself had failed to plan ahead, and consequently was ill-prepared when it should have taken the leadership in the anti-inflation program. It was not the established, powerful, old-line agency that led the anti-inflation fight but rather the fledgling Office of Price Administration under a man to whom Mr. Paul refers at one point as the "turbulent Leon Henderson." There were many times when the staff in OPA longed to see a bit more "turbulence" in the Treasury.

If Mr. Paul's war history chapters are the most generally interesting part of his book, there is much more here than mere history. Actually in the last two parts, the author gives us a vigorous and persuasive statement of the case for using carefully calculated taxation and fiscal policy as a means for maintaining a high level of business activity and a relatively stable economic system, at least one from which extreme fluctuations have been eliminated. To Mr. Paul, federal taxes are the means or instruments of sound general economic planning, not merely revenue raising devices. He knows that they have an unavoidable general impact which we ignore at our peril. Moreover, he appreciates the fact that the way the federal government handles an annual budget, which is more likely to be over thirty billion dollars a year than under that figure for some time to come, will be of crucial though not, of course, of exclusive importance in determining the level of business activity.

As he himself puts it, "Well planned taxes can materially help us to achieve economic stability. Taxes can be used as the occasion warrants, to regulate the speed of the economic machine. They can be used to curb inflation or arrest deflation." With the general validity of Mr. Paul's economic analysis I have little quarrel. He is more sophisticated in his appreciation of the relation of the tax burden to investment as well as to consumption than are many of the young economists who prattle glibly in Keynesian terms. But it does seem to me that he, like so many others, almost completely overlooks the overwhelming political and administrative difficulty in the United States of actually making operative the sensible taxation program which he advocates.

Certainly we need a tax system equipped with what others have called "built-in flexibility" and we need the kind of fiscal policy which Mr. Paul outlines so brilliantly. But while it would be a pleasant escape to do so, we must not forget how federal fiscal policy and taxation measures are actually formulated. Read the newspapers and weep. But read Mr. Paul's book and maybe you will feel like doing something about it. There is much that might be done, and vigorous, insistent public opinion will help to get it done.

Paul M. O'Leary, former OPA deputy administrator, is dean of Cornell's School of Business and Public Administration.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 686)

BARROWS DUNHAM:
MAN AGAINST MYTH

The human race, which abolished slavery . . . , which learned and practised political democracy, cannot be eternally thwarted of control over its entire social destiny. . . . The dreams men dream while waking can become the substance of a world.

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Shall We Suffer More Emigrés?

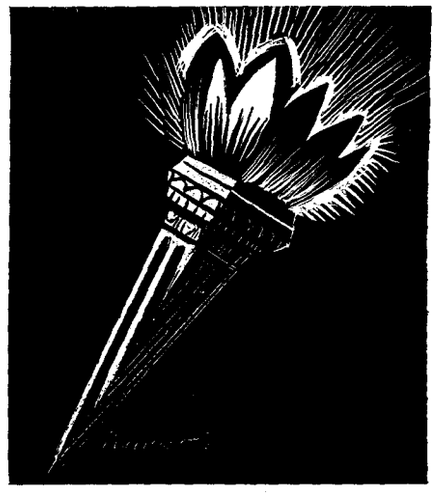
HENRY PRATT FAIRCHILD

OF ALL the multitudinous factors which have combined to determine the character of the American nation and its individual citizens, few have been more influential than the great current of thirty-nine million foreigners which has flowed into it since 1820. This is roughly equivalent to the transfer of the entire population of England or of France within the potential lifetime of one hardy individual. This is the most prodigious phenomenon of its kind in the whole of human experience, and its consequences inevitably ramify out into every department of the national life.

To make a generalization like this is easy. It is by no means so easy to establish in detail just what these particular consequences have been. Immigration is only one of many factors, and no expository procedure is more fallacious than the all-too-familiar one of singling out one specific item from a causative complex, and attributing a given phenomenon exclusively to it. (Example: American railroads are the best in the world. They are privately owned. Therefore public ownership of railroads is bad.)

Does immigration increase the crime rate in the United States? Has it lowered the level of living of the American workman, or kept it from rising? Has it promoted or retarded the growth of trade unions? Is the population of the United States larger than it would have been without the immigrants, and if so by how much? These and many other questions have been debated over and over by the specialists in the field and yet no one can give an uncontrovertible answer. But it is certain that no one of these features of the American scene is precisely what it would have been without the foreigners.

One thing that makes the analysis difficult is the great variations in the immigrant stream itself. Not only have there been many racial and national components, but the dominant motivation has differed from period to period. There is a well-established tradition in the American psychology that immigrants have come to our shores seeking a "haven of refuge" from political discrimination or religious persecution. At times this has been true. The immigrants from Central Europe about the middle of the last century were characteristically the victims of thwarted democratic revolutionary movements.



The contemporary Irish immigrants, on the other hand, were simply fleeing from famine.

By the beginning of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when the really overwhelming flow of aliens was just getting under way, the dominating motive had become definitely economic. It was the search for a better level of living that stimulated the Scandinavians, and later the Poles, the Russian Jews, the Italians, and the denizens of the Balkan regions to break their home ties and throw in their lot permanently or temporarily with the land across the sea, although in the case of the Jews there was doubtless also still an element of escape from persecution. It was this materialistic feature of the movement, along with its swelling volume, that eventually induced the American people to take a less lenient attitude toward immigration itself and to adopt a definite policy of numerical restriction on the quota basis.

Within the past fifteen years, on account of political conditions in Europe, there has been a definite swing back to the motivation of escape from persecution—a persecution that frequently eventuated in death. The typical immigrants of this period, at least those who have made the greatest impact on the American mind and heart, have been "refugees." It was logical and inevitable that there should be a corresponding change in the prevailing attitude of the American people toward the newcomers. Having been trained for a generation or more to view the immigrant stream in terms of rational analysis and materialistic appraisal, they now began to regard it emotionally. The heart once more took precedence over the head, sympathy with suffering fellow-humans superseded a cool analysis of the probable effects on the receiving country.

In anticipation of the cessation of actual hostilities it was appropriate, and highly desirable, that an objective study should be made of the concrete features of the emigré movement, the types of individuals involved, the gross numbers, the methods of dealing with them, the consequences to themselves, the effects upon the United States, the opinions of America and Americans held by the foreigners, and the reverse. This was particularly important because the need for escape from the troubled conditions of Europe did not cease with the war, and it could have been foreseen, as has actually transpired, that there would be a powerful demand for the continuation of an exceptionally hospitable policy toward refugees for some years to come.

THIS need has been met in an impressive and comprehensive way by the study, directed by Professor Maurice Davie of Yale, the results of which are presented in "Refugees in America."*

After an introductory chapter on organization and methodology, the book proceeds with summary analyses of the causes of the great exodus, the general immigration background in the United States, and the extent and characteristics of this particular movement, one significant item of which is the demonstration that certain current assertions that a million or more refugees had been admitted were gross exaggerations. Then follows one of the most interesting and significant chapters in the book, "What the Refugees Think of America," a close parallel being a later one on "What Americans Think of the Refugees." The general import of both these chapters is not very startling, just about what would have been expected. There are bright lights and deep shadows on both sides. But the details are often vivid and fascinating, especially when presented in the form of verbatim personal stories. Naturally, against the background of what they were escaping, the refugees found much in American life to suggest Paradise, but there were also many features which were not so attractive, and in many respects the problems of adjustment were decidedly serious.

There are elaborate statistical presentations of the age, occupational and religious composition of the incoming

(*Continued on page* 30)

*REFUGEES IN AMERICA. By Maurice R. Davie. New York: Harper & Bros. 1947. 404 pp. $4.50.

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Rosier Views of Reds

STALIN MUST HAVE PEACE. By Edgar Snow. New York: Random House. 1947. 184 *pp.* $2.50.

WAR OR PEACE WITH RUSSIA. By Earl Browder. New York: A. A. Wyn, Inc. 1947. 190 *pp.* $2.50.

JUST TELL THE TRUTH. By John L. Strohm. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1947. 243 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by MAURICE HINDUS

EDGAR SNOW is one of the very few publicists in the English-speaking world who before writing a book on a foreign country makes a searching study of its geography, its history, its folkways, its political movements and acquires a commendable knowledge of its language. It is as impossible for him to write a book after visiting a country for six weeks or even six months as it would be for a freshman or sophomore medic to perform a caesarian or any other surgical operation. That is why Snow's books, whether on China, India, or Russia, are as refreshing as they are enlightening, crowded as they are with fact and comments which enable the reader to brush aside his own preconceptions and to identify himself in mind if not always in heart with the people about whom Snow writes.

This is particularly true of his new book on Russia, in which by means of telling quotations, spicy snatches of dialogue, and incisive interpretations, he lays bare before the reader the nature and the meaning of the basic clashes between American and Russian diplomacy. No other American has pointed up so sharply the importance of mere semantics as an insidious source of these clashes. The Russians bandy around the words "democracy" and "liberty" as gloatingly as we do, but their definition of these words fits ours no more than ours fits theirs. At the San Francisco Conference the Russians sought to insert into the United Nations charter a provision for "the right to work." We fought it. We sought to interpolate a provision for "the right to free enterprise." The Russians fought that.

From Snow's book more than from any other this reviewer has read it becomes clear that Russia's hate of private ownership and ours of state ownership is the dynamite that sets off one diplomatic explosion after another. But Snow is no pessimist. He believes firmly that outstanding quarrels and rivalries can be mediated, and in his chapter on "Investment for Peace," he outlines concrete suggestions for the much-wanted reconciliation.

A special and quite exciting feature of this book is the lengthy introduction from the pen of Martin Sommers, foreign editor of *The Saturday Evening Post.* For the first time and in dramatic detail Sommers tells the story of how Winston Churchill outmaneuvered himself in 1942 by arguing Roosevelt out of the decision to launch a "second front" in 1943. Churchill's aim was to strike at the "underbelly" of Europe with a view to keeping the Red Army out of the Balkans, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. The scheme boomeranged with a vengeance on its creator and in the end, of course, it was the Russian armies that swept into these strategic lands.

John L. Strohm, author of "Just Tell the Truth," has neither Snow's literary gifts nor Snow's analytical power. His is a non-political book. Representing a group of American agricultural journals he applied for a Russian visa through the usual official channels, and when the obtuse Moscow bureaucrats failed to act on his application he cabled Stalin and the visa was hurried to him to Berlin.

Calling himself "a Republican and and a soft-shelled Baptist," he made a journey of 4,000 miles in Russia without benefit of an official guide. He saw plenty of poverty and misery but also unbounded creative effort.

The Russian village excited and entranced him and so did the achievements of Russian agricultural science. He saw a newly developed pear tree that yields two crops a year; a pygmy grapefruit which winters under snow and survives the severest freezes; natural-colored "cotton that does not fade," and serums that "make ewes give birth to twins and triplets instead of single lambs—all as utterly fantastic as the string beans growing on trees." Strohm's is a lively book, chiefly about peasants, written in a simple, rather jerky style, but with a deep feeling for the soil and for the men and women who till it.

Earl Browder's "War or Peace with Russia" has neither the meatiness of Snow's book nor the exuberance of Strohm's narrative. The former secretary of the American Communist Party is convinced Russian-American conflicts could be mediated on the basis of the Roosevelt policies. He assumes there would have been no clash between Moscow and Washington in the interpretation and application of these policies. Nowhere is there a hint that Russia ever errs. Yet Browder is urbane enough to treat his opponents with such dignity and respect that the staunchest anti-Communist can read him without suffering a rise in blood-pressure.

—*Sovfoto.*

A free day to Klaipeda residents means time to restore their bomb-blasted village.

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Let's Get the Record Straight

FOR some time the more intellectual British weeklies and pro-labor newspapers have been markedly anti-American. President Truman's "Doctrine" and Henry Wallace's visit abroad have recently strengthened this tendency. Sentences like this, taken from a recent issue of that well-written and famous weekly *The New Statesman and Nation*, are becoming commonplaces, "If there is to be talk of appeasement, then it should be applied to the one country which has the economic stranglehold and military power sufficient to cajole us into sacrificing our national interest and political principles for the sake of an easy life." Or read this one, "The American people, responding to a well-organized propaganda campaign, is now possessed of an anti-communist hysteria far stronger than any disapproval of Germany which it displayed during the war." Furthermore, there has recently been published a survey made by "Mass Observation," a British counterpart of our Gallup poll, which states that unfavorable views of America have steadily increased over the past year. The British public now believes, apparently, that while we are simple, impulsive, and uninhibited, we are also boastful, bad-mannered, flamboyant, and full of prejudices toward racial minorities. Obviously, the millions of dollars spent during the war by our propaganda departments to foster a mutual love affair between the British and ourselves are running out with the sands of time, diminishing about as rapidly as the three billion and a half dollars of the American loan.

This new British attitude toward us might have been foretold by any good psychiatrist. While the peoples of England, Scotland, and Wales have endured the savage blows of nature, which seems to have turned fascist for six months, with the fortitude with which they endured the long blitzkrieg, they are showing signs of weariness, and understandable evidences of short temper. They seem to be taking some of it out on America. It was, therefore, not surprising to find in the same issue of *The New Statesman* from which we have quoted, a lop-sided or one-eyed view of American publishing and writing today which cries out for an answer.

The author, Mr. Ross Campbell, whose article we are reprinting on the opposite page, assembles in one package most of our manifest absurdities. His approach is not through literary criticism which one might respect, whatever his opinions might be. It is an ably written burlesque of our tough murder mysteries; the oversexed historical romances written by young women whose radiant beauty is as highly advertised as the "lusty" books themselves; the minor league writers who every month hit one of the two jackpots provided by the major book clubs, and on whom a golden flood rains from the Hollywood cornucopia, with tributary streams from the book publisher and digest magazines.

There are more celebrated English writers over here than you can shake a stick at who do not seem to be afraid of being cheapened or spoiled by American money. And there are plenty of writers in England who typed magazine potboilers with fingers stiff with cold a few months ago, who are now waiting with some excitement for news from their American agents that a story has been sold for $750 for which the writer may be later paid 15 guineas in England. In other words, for better or for worse, North America has become the major market for the kind of literature, whether first- or second-rate, in which a large audience may be expected to be interested.

This attack against the book clubs and the movies as destroyers of literary talent has been going on for years. It is very "old hat." Men, like women, can be ruined by success and sudden wealth, or they can take it in their stride. If the vision and the creative impulse of a writer, young or old, is powerful enough, no harm need be done, and indeed, affluence may soften too rigid patterns of thought and bring new and vital experiences to writers who must always replenish from the top what has been drained from them. If they are not strong enough to resist temptation, their vital weakness would, in any case, be revealed before long. It is difficult to believe the genius of a D. H. Lawrence, for example, would have been diluted or soured by financial success. He might not, then, have died of consumption at forty-four in a Swiss sanitorium and thus would have given the world more of his vivid, challenging books.

Mr. Campbell should have had more patience with us, for both in England and America the years of war and the uncertain years of the peace have left both English and American writers with anxiety complexes of various sorts. "It is not surprising," he says, "that a number of distinguished American novelists have deteriorated since they became celebrities." He illustrates his dismal thesis with a book of Sinclair Lewis of seven years ago, with John Steinbeck's five-year-old "The Moon Is Down," with Marquand's last two novels. He notes that "B. F.'s Daughter" sold 850,000 copies before publication, as if there was something wrong with that, neglecting to mention about three-quarters of that number went to a book club's readers. He adds that Ernest Hemingway has gone to Havana to write his next book, as if there was something wrong with that too; forgetting that that bearded centaur can be back in New York in six hours if he wants literary conversation with his fellows. Besides, why shouldn't Mr. Hemingway write under Havana palm trees if he wants to, and Aldous Huxley luxuriate in California as he sinks deeper and deeper into the metaphysics of Vedanta philosophy, or is religion a better word for it?

There are a few serious misstate-

O Eloquence of Death!

By Madeline Mason

O ELOQUENCE of death!
Crescendo of the breath.
Voices of the tomb,
Your tongue is mold,
Your word is never cold.

For words are built of air
And air is everywhere
And stretches wide the grave.
How loud, how loud
It issues from the shroud.

Immeasurable sound
That swells upon the ground,
Speech of the mighty dead,
Disinterred
By power of the word.

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ments in Mr. Campbell's article. He writes that "disrespectful treatment of the American way of life is not encouraged." That is worse than a misstatement.

Nearly all of our widely successful serious novels are ferociously disrespectful to our ways and habits of thought. Look at the record. Robert Penn Warren's "All the King's Men," perhaps the best novel of 1946, has won a Pulitzer prize. It is an attack on Southern prejudices and politics in which he excoriates the loose-mouthed Southern Senator. Sinclair Lewis's new novel, taken by a book club, is savage satire on our discrimination against the Negroes; it will sell over a million copies; Lillian Smith's best seller was the same; a recent novel, near the top of the lists, is Laura Hobson's defense of our Jewish minority. Another 1946 novel blasted radio advertising. What we have in store for us nobody knows; but you can be certain that publishers are going around looking for writers with sharp teeth and bad tempers, who like as little about the American scene as is possible. Even the movies and the popular magazines have accepted racial prejudice as a profitable subject.

Mr. Campbell is wrong about Edmund Wilson's "Memoirs of Hecate County." It was indeed attacked by the Hearst press as obscene, and it was censored, but few but the long-haired tribe thought it was "superior to nearly all the other works of fiction published last year," and certainly they did not "cold-shoulder" it because it satirized New York publishing or caricatured two critics. Since Mr. Campbell is a journalist and not a literary critic we can forgive him that blunder. Here is another bloomer on his part: "A common method of writing a book is to retire with a dictaphone." That is plain nonsense, for no serious American work of literature has ever emerged from that contrivance, or ever will, and there is plenty of that commodity known as literature flowing from American presses.

But above all, he has neglected the young writers whose work is beginning to appear, sometimes in the "little magazines," or among the long lists of hopeful first books appearing on publishers' schedules. As Lewis Gannett, whose eye also caught *The New Statesman's* article, says, "There are a lot of young writers holed up in them thar' hills, Mr. Campbell, far from the literary cocktail shindigs, and I suspect that a year or two will prove that some of them are digging gold." We might add that some of the gold has already been delivered.

H. S.

Books and Ballyhoo

ROSS CAMPBELL

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The following article, referred to in the accompanying editorial, appeared in* The New Statesman and Nation, *April 26, 1947.*

TEN years ago English critics, filled with admiration for the works of Hemingway, Steinbeck, Runyon, O'Hara, and others, were much given to praising the superior originality and vigor of American writers. But there is little to excite such enthusiasm today. The "toughness" which once seemed a refreshing innovation has become an ugly formula for Hollywood and the mystery writers. New York reviewers privately, though not always in public, agree that there is a marked current scarcity of American books with real distinction or conscientious workmanship.

On the business side, however, American literature is doing very well. In New York this year for the first time in history a book was advertised by an illuminated airship. Despite the recession from the wartime book boom, successful writers are making more money than writers ever made before. The book clubs distribute their wares by the million. Vast numbers of copies of cheap pocket editions are sold in drug stores. Book sales in the U.S.A. in 1945 grossed an estimated $400,000,000. Hollywood studios pay up to $250,000 for film rights of a bestseller. Moreover, it is possible to sell a book to Hollywood before it is written. Hal Wallis, the producer, lately paid a large sum for the rights of a novel about Lola Montez while it was still an idea in the author's head.

As in the case of automobiles and certain other big American industries, control of publishing has been centralized in a few powerful corporations. Most of the industry is now run by four concerns: Doubleday and Co.; Simon and Schuster, which is tied to the Marshall Field interests: the World Publishing Company; and a combine of several firms with the Book-of-the-Month Club. Shares in these companies are not yet quoted on the New York Stock Exchange, but that development has been predicted. (The stock of a publishing corporation will presumably jump several points when the house brings out a spirited piece of costume pornography.) The new industrial efficiency of American publishing is also to be seen in the technique of many authors. A common method of writing a book is to retire for a few weeks with a dictaphone. When Mr. Ralph Ingersoll resigned from the editorship of *PM* he announced that he was going to his farm for a while "to finish three books."

AMERICAN publishing has followed the perfume and film industries by making extensive use of sex appeal.

The discovery that books sell better if they are by pretty girls was made some years ago, and a certain preference is given to manuscripts by writers in this category. Advertisements always include photographs of the lovely authors. As a result, a glance through the book supplements of the New York press gives the odd impression that most American literature is produced by alluring young women. This situation inspired a magazine drawing which depicted two men watching a lightly-clad performer in a night club. One man was saying: "Have you read her latest novel?"*

The trend toward beautiful authors began with Kathleen Winsor, author of "Forever Amber." A striking Californian brunette, Miss Winsor was brought to New York and presented to the press at the usual cocktail party. For this function her astute agent dressed her in a Hattie Carnegie frock and a John-Frederics hat—details of that kind are important in American literature today—and Miss Winsor was a dazzling sight. Her beauty, combined with the amorous contents of "Forever Amber," gained the book its huge sale. Miss Winsor crowned her literary triumph by marrying the band leader Artie Shaw.

Similar tactics brought fame to exquisite Nancy Bruff, described by *Time* as "one of Park Avenue's greatest women writers." Backed by her wealthy husband, Nancy Bruff put

*SRL November 9, 1946.

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the publicity of her novel "The Manatee" into the hands of Russell Birdwell, America's leading press agent, renowned for his "stunt" promotion of film stars. The book's rise to the top of the best-seller lists was attributed largely to the author's portrait and to Mr. Birdwell's shrewd choice of the jacket design—a ship's figurehead in the form of a nude female.

The vogue for erotic themes in a period setting has become a familiar joke. A whole series of recent best-selling costume novels, like "Forever Amber," "Kitty," and "Duchess Hotspur," relate the adventures of a tempestuous heroine of easy virtue. An important condition for the success of a book of this kind is that it should be banned in Boston. *The New Yorker* made its inevitable comment by a drawing which showed an interview in a publisher's office. The publisher was saying to an author: "Your novel is excellently written, Mr. Higgins. But where is your *hussy*?" Mr. Bennett Cerf, witty head of the Random House publishing firm, wrote for *The Saturday Review of Literature* a burlesque account of the promotion campaign for a novel called "The Lustful Princess," chosen as book of the month by the Non-Literature Book Club. But despite this ridicule, novels of the "hussy" school continue to appear, because they make money. Also popular are biographies of American historical characters, lauding the American way of life. Disrespectful treatment of the American way of life is not encouraged. A writer of my acquaintance who had a book accepted by one of the most reputable New York publishers was told to alter a sentence in which he had said some American soldiers were giggling. "We are a virile people," said the editor, "and our soldiers do not giggle."

The progress of an author who "hits the jackpot" in the U.S.A. is now fairly stereotyped. Let us call him Jones. His novel is chosen by the Book-of-the-Month Club, which makes a down payment of $50,000, with more to follow if subscribers like the book. The film rights are sold for $100,000. Meanwhile Jones's agent, who gets ten per cent of everything, works feverishly for publicity—and New York literary agents are not diffident people. Jones is photographed and interviewed by the press, meets the columnists, frequents the Stork Club, addresses luncheons, goes on the air in the program called "The Author Meets the Critics." National advertising pushes his bookstore sales. A deal is made for foreign publication rights. Later 700,000 copies of a pocket reprint are sold in drug stores (though Jones does not get much out of this). He is invited to fly "out to the Coast" to script a film for $2,000 a week. He rents a large Manhattan apartment, buys a smart farm in Connecticut, makes rich new friends, and sees less of the humbler people he used to write about.

A WRITER needs considerable strength of character to remain a serious artist in the midst of this ballyhoo, and it is not surprising that the work of a number of distinguished American novelists has deteriorated since they became celebrities. Sinclair Lewis has lost his satirical punch and writes nondescript best-sellers like "Bethel Merriday." John O'Hara produces only slight *New Yorker* stories about people insulting one another in night clubs. John Steinbeck's "The Moon is Down" was little more than a movie scenario. Ernest Hemingway's wartime journalism was a parody of his famous style. He has gone to Havana to write his next book, because, he says, people don't know him there. John P. Marquand's last two novels, both tailormade for the screen, were distinctly inferior to the sharp studies of New England life he once wrote. But they were profitable; the latest, "B. F.'s Daughter," had a pre-publication printing of 850,000 copies.

Some well-known men of letters, among them John P. Marquand and Christopher Morley, are employed as selectors by the book clubs, and many reviewers—though by no means all—cooperate in the business of book marketing. Works chosen by the leading book clubs get long reviews and are usually over-praised. Also, unusual books which defy commercial standards of taste often have a cool critical reception. An example was Edmund Wilson's "Memoirs of Hecate County." This notable but rather unpleasant book had a *succès de scandale*, was denounced as indecent by the Hearst press, and was banned in several cities. During the controversy the critics, while admitting that it was well written, refrained from mentioning the most conspicuous fact about it: that "Memoirs of Hecate County" was superior to nearly all other American works of fiction published last year. One reason for this cold-shouldering was that an episode in the book bitterly satirized the New York publishing trade, with recognizable caricatures of two well-known critics. Edmund Wilson, himself the best critic in America, has obstinately persisted in the view that literature is an art, not a business, and the attitude has not increased his popularity in the profession.

James T. Farrell, one of the most conscientious American writers, lately deplored the "Hollywoodization" of books in the U.S.A. James Hilton, himself a successful Hollywood writer has said that books are aligned with films, radio, television, gramophone records, magazines, and comic strips in the great machinery of mass entertainment. It is now generally accepted that books have been allotted their place in the American dream.

Only a few authors become best-sellers, but all are exposed to unprecedented pressure and temptation to follow the slick popular formulas. And the pressure is greatest on those who achieve the most recognition. To a large extent publishers now have the same purpose as American manufacturers—to turn out a neatly packaged, well-advertised product of standard quality for the mass market. This is done with immense success by the glossy magazines. But when applied to literature it has a disadvantage, because a good book cannot be a standard product. One result of the present scarcity of distinguished American works in relation to the huge market is that outstanding books from Britain sometimes have a more enthusiastic reception there than they do at home. Evelyn Waugh's "Brideshead Revisited" and George Orwell's "Animal Farm" are examples. The present is no golden age in English literature; but the best English books, written as a rule by plain men rather than pretty girls, and written in the old-fashioned way without regard for club selections or film rights, are still marked by individuality and hand finish. In America these qualities are somehow being lost among the sales charts and the dictaphones.

Snow-Fall

By Sara Van Alstyne Allen

WINTER upon the earth but not within the mind.
Whatever frost we find upon the single stone
Will never pierce the bone whose sustenance is mirth,
Whose very shape is carved from summer's dream.
Awake . . . the flowers float from out the winter night;
The petals curved from light in gardens of the cold;
The buds that will unfold along the voyaging.
Open your hands to this . . . the evanescent bliss,
The gift simple and pure, whose meaning will endure.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Radical Experience

SIR: In the present intellectual climate it would be naïve of me to expect sympathetic consideration for a book that arraigns rather than idealizes renegades from Communism. It would have given me unexpected pleasure to have found in Mr. Rothman's review of my book "The Judas Time," [*SRL* Apr. 12] consideration of its whole content and consideration of its other intentions besides the one Mr. Rothman chose to dwell on. However I did expect accuracy; but that too was missing.

Mr. Rothman concentrated his attention on my, alleged, notion that everybody who leaves a radical political party "must naturally," as Mr. Rothman puts it, not I, "become a maniacal informer and murderer."

In his conclusion Mr. Rothman asks, rhetorically, "Couldn't a man leave the party . . . and remain pretty much the same man?" And since Mr. Rothman gives an implied affirmative answer, I must assume that he knows little about the experience he presumes to make judgments upon. Membership in a radical political party is a major experience and one seldom is left unchanged or little changed by it.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

New York, N. Y.

Books for Mr. Platt

SIR: My nomination for Mr. Rutherford Platt [*SRL* Letters to the Editor Apr. 12] is the first of Alfred North Whitehead's great trilogy, "Science and the Modern World," first published, I believe, by Cambridge University Press in 1926 and since reprinted seven times. Penguin (England) published it in 1938.

Herbert Read has called this book "the most important published in the conjoint realms of science and philosophy since Descartes' "Discourse on Method," and Julian Huxley says it is "one of those books that marks an epoch."

HUGH WHITNEY MORRISON.

New York, N. Y.

SIR: For Mr. Rutherford Platt's list of reading I suggest "Worst Journey in the World," by Apsley Chery-Ganard.

B. E. KYDD.

Cooperstown, N. Y.

SIR: Suggestion for Mr. R. Platt's reading: "Black Lamb and Grey Falcon" by Rebecca West.

P. B.

Waco, Tex.

Mr. Bodenheim's Poems

SIR: A poet has no right to object to the honest, largely dissenting opinion of a reviewer. He has, however, every right to object to a reviewer who takes scattered lines from different poems and places them together, thus deliberately and trickily "substantiating" his contention that the poet's creations hold a jumbled effect [*SRL* Mar. 22].

"I was cleaning my gun and it went off five times."

Mr. Nims also states that my poems of social message constitute mere fervid journalism and represent manifesto verse. The proof is in the pudding. I think that the following sonnet from the social message sections of my book effectively refutes Mr. Nim's assertions:

Sincerely Yours, Culture

The symphony was finished in a frayed,
Small, evil-smelling room. This was the price—
His mind was close to cracking in a vise
Of unpaid rent, last notes were written, played
With fingers steeped in kerosene. The sprayed
And perforated stove did not suffice
To warm his hands. And deeper than a slice
Across his heart, the voice, the nightly raid.
"You owe for seven weeks. Why don't you sell
Your piano keeping everyone awake?
Pay or get out!" He checked his dull replies.
This old landlady, what possessed her yell?
Insane concealment, past privation, ache?
He pressed her hand. She pressed his—in surprise.

I hope that you will be fair enough to print this letter and poem in *The Saturday Review.*

MAXWELL BODENHEIM.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

SIR: I completely agree with Mr. Bodenheim that a poet has every right to object to the method he describes in his second sentence. But his objection should be addressed to Mr. Etaoin Shrdlu* and not to me: I left sufficient space between the three quotations to separate them; somewhere in the process of printing the spaces were omitted. I am sorry if any readers were misled. I do not think the touching sonnet proves much about what Mr. Bodenheim calls the "Poems of Social Message"; though among them, it is a plum from another (and more poetic) pudding.

JOHN FREDERICK NIMS.

South Bend, Ind.

* EDITOR'S NOTE: *Etaoin Shrdlu is pied type from a linotype machine.*

Allegorists

SIR: Rex Warner ["The Allegorical Method, *SRL* Apr. 5"] indicates Dickens among allegorists but categorically includes Bunyan, citing Mr. Nogood, Mr. Malice, Mr. Love-Lust, Pope, Pagan, and the rest. Just offhand, I am reminded of Mr. Gradgrind, the Cheeryble Brothers, Lord Frederick Verisopht, Sir Mulberry Hawk, Oliver Twist, Scrooge, *et aliis.*

LAMBERT FAIRCHILD.

New York, N. Y.

Where Is James Francis Dwyer?

SIR: Is it possible that some *SRL* reader might know the present whereabouts of James Francis Dwyer, author, traveler, and observer?

Am interested in including one of his stories in my anthology of "Homing Pigeon" manuscripts.

CHET L. SWITAL.

Glendale, Calif.

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Seeing Things

THE HUNT AND THE HUNTED

THE letter was dashed off twenty-one years ago. It was written by Barrie from his home in the Adelphi Terrace. Near him was a manuscript of a new play by his old friend John Galsworthy. Under the title of "Escape" this play was to conquer London within the next three months and New York a year and a half later.

Returning a manuscript is an irksome job. Returning one registered is more bothersome still. Everybody knows this who has ever toted one to a postoffice and stood in line there. Barrie, however, did not complain. Why should he? As is the way of a world blessedly male (at least in certain respects), his secretary would face this ordeal for him. She would, of course, receive no mite of credit. And he would think nothing of saying, "I'll send it back registered tomorrow," when what he meant was that she would do the sending for him.

In the highest of good spirits, therefore, Barrie wrote, "My dear G.,—All I can say is that I could not lay the play down until I had finished it. I once joined in the long pursuit of a thief in Oxford Street, but it was nothing like as vivid as this, and I feel as if I had been on the heels of Matt the whole time (propelling him forward as my St. Bernard used to do when the rabbits he was pursuing wouldn't go fast enough)."

This feeling of being actually on the heels of the pursued, and of propelling him forward as he seeks to elude his hunters, was shared by all who saw the late Leslie Howard as Matt Denant in "Escape." It is a feeling bound to be experienced in a more acute form by everyone who watches James Mason when, as a wounded fugitive in "Odd Man Out,"* he endeavors to elude the police in their search for him through the dark, wet streets of Belfast.

This new British picture cannot, because of its subject matter, avoid calling to mind both Galsworthy's play and such a memorable film—the model of its genre—as John Ford's "The Informer." Yet the virtues in its treatment, which at their best are exceptional, are very much its own. They are the product of that integrity, so rare in most Hollywood offerings, which has of late come close to being habitual in the worthier English movies. They are the product, too, of that genius for suspense which its director, Carol Reed, showed in such a superior thriller as "Night Train." Yes, and of Mr. Reed's devotion to, and mastery of, the camera as a unique medium.

A man-hunt on the stage is not—and neither can nor should be—what it is on the screen. The theatre is no enemy of the pursued. But, as in the case of "Escape," "The Emperor Jones," or "Crime and Punishment" (when dramatized), the theatre's chief concern, quite properly, is psychological rather than physical. It is the hunted, not the hunt, that is the stage's business. And the modern stage is wisest when it minds it.

The camera and the "chase," however, have been friends since the first nickelodeon. They were friends in the far-off days of the Keystone comedies and the earliest Westerns. They remain friends in the latest "horse-opera" or gangster melodrama. But they became the best of good friends in "The Informer" and "Odd Man Out."

Our great-grandfathers may have been thrilled at seeing Eliza as, babe in hand and to the tune of baying bloodhounds, she jumped, far back in a forest of painted trees, from one canvas iceblock to another across a non-existent Ohio River. But, due to the movies, all this is changed.

We would laugh at what playgoers in a simpler day found agonizing. Our laughter would in part be the result of the lessons we have learned from the movies. By changing our knowledge of what cannot be adequately done behind the footlights, they have instructed us in what should be done there. They have altered our expectations. Hence they have transformed our whole notion of realism. They have done this by being able to set before us indoors the real outdoor thing itself, or something which in depth and dimensions at least seems to be the real thing.

UNLIKE our great-grandparents, or even our grandparents, we live in an age in which the theatre is no longer the only outlet for actable material. There are now four dramatic worlds where formerly there was one. The stage, the motion pictures, the radio, and television—each of these is in essence (and when it is being most fruitfully employed) a world of its own; a medium in its own rights. Needless to say, overlapping zones or, if you prefer areas of permissible and necessary encroachment connect these separate worlds. But such shared domains are apt to be their least exciting parts.

Regardless of the extent to which they have threatened the theatre commercially, the movies have sup-

The cast of "Odd Men Out" is not prettied up. "They wear clothes, not costumes; expressions instead of make-up . . . [and] belong to city streets and pubs and tenements rather than to movie lots."

* *ODD MAN OUT, screen play by F. L. Green and Robert C. Sherriff, based on a novel by F. L. Green. Directed and produced by Carol Reed for J. Arthur Rank in England and released here by Universal-International. With a cast including James Mason, Kathleen Ryan, Robert Newton, Robert Beatty, Kitty Kirwin, Maureen Delany, Dennis O'Dea, F. J. McCormick, W. C. Fay. At Loew's Criterion.*

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plied it with what, artistically considered, is not a competitor but an alternative. Instead of sounding the stage's death-knell, this alternative has merely relieved the theatre of the obligation of dealing with certain materials which were never its affair. It should have done more than this.

It should have forced the stage, for example, to take stock of its distinct possibilities; to be truer to itself as a medium; and to realize that the liabilities of this medium can be turned into assets. It should have taught it to place a proper value on language; on poetry; on lights, colors, and textures; on the needs of an audience both seen and felt; on suggestion; on the imagination; on action that is interior rather than external. If the theatre has often been befuddled in understanding (much less making the most of) its new opportunities, the movies have been equally confused in exploring those very green pastures which are their special province.

Even such a film as "Odd Man Out" is not a complete exception. Fortunately, during its first two-thirds it gives no sense of having had its origins in a novel. At its beginning, and well past its central portion, it is a movie doing what only a movie could do. Then it stands alone; independent and self-reliant; a story brilliantly advanced, for the most part, in the visual terms of its chosen medium.

We are introduced to a shadowy world of plotting without being told the why's and wherefore's of a conspiracy that is under way. We only know that what is indefinitely referred to as "the organization" is planning to hold up a mill. James Mason is the leader of the gang which huddles around a table in a small upstairs room in the slums of Belfast. He has recently been released from jail, and his confederates wonder if he is strong enough to undertake the task at hand.

According to schedule, the various men, carrying briefcases, assemble at the mill. A driver sits in a car at the entrance. He is nervous as the minutes tick by, and even more nervous when the sound of a burglar-alarm rings out in the building. The hold-up goes off as the men hope. At least it does inside the mill. It is on the steps outside that things go wrong.

There, when seconds are precious, the leader retards the get-away by suffering from a dizzy spell. The delay proves costly and complicating. The leader is severely wounded in the arm by a man he is forced to kill in self-defense. More than being a bandit, the leader is now a murderer. His accomplices whisk him into the

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waiting car. They make a dash for it through the narrow streets. They would have saved him, as they saved themselves, if only at an abrupt turn he had not fallen from the car.

Immediately thereafter the chase is on; the man-hunt has begun. The leader is one person against an aroused city. Though the police net draws closer and closer on him, he first

manages to totter to an air raid shelter, and subsequently to get the aid of sympathetic strangers or venal friends. At last he and his sweetheart, who has finally found him, are shot down by a rain of policemen's bullets when the ship on which they might have escaped is slipping out into the darkness.

As here sketched in verbal terms, few things (except for its unhappy ending) could be more humdrum than this framework for the basic action of "Odd Man Out." Film after film has shown a hold-up, the waiting car outside, or suggested the terrors of the pursuit. It is, however, at just this point of widest familiarity that, due to Carol Reed's inventive direction, James Mason's new movie becomes most original.

Any reader of Georges Polti's catalogue of the thirty-six possible dramatic situations learns one, and only one, thing from that work which is monumental only in its dreariness. This is that what matters is never the theme, but always the way in which the theme is handled; in other words, the redeeming, all-vital importance of treatment. It is the (perish the hideous word and its unfortunate readers) "cinematic" or (worse still and due to Allardyce Nicoll) "filmic" genius shown by Mr. Reed in dealing with these tired stuffs in fresh camera terms which makes them seem both new and stirring in the better portions of "Odd Man Out."

Unlike most Hollywood directors, Mr. Reed is not cursed with a fondness for the grandiose. For suspense he depends upon his small details. Close-ups in a tiny room; pools of light in a foggy street; the scraping of running feet on a sidewalk; blinds suddenly lifted by curious neighbors; waiters whispering in a bar; policemen huddled at a corner; people not as actors or as stage characters but as real people; even the faint antiphonal ringing of a burglar-alarm throughout sequences of violent action—these are but some of the means employed by Mr. Reed.

At his best he does not tell a story in words. He sees one in terms both animate and inanimate. Moreover, he permits us to see it according to his own wise analysis and under the exciting chaperonage of his camera.

The pity is that Mr. Reed does not devote his entire attention to the chase. Even in its gripping introductory moments his film slows down perceptibly whenever he is misled into allowing his attention to wander from what should be his sole concern. The pity is that the narrative line of F. L. Green's and R. C. Sherriff's scenario becomes smudged. It loses its way in such a claptrap sequence as the one in which a mad artist seeks to paint a dying man. It concludes with a still murkier interlude in which with a midget's stretch it reaches out for a philosophic meaning that it never grasps.

DID I speak some time back of he film's integrity? And does this sound strange when I have mentioned claptrap? May I quickly insist that this integrity exists in the production even when it is abandoned in the script. Mr. Reed has assembled an extraordinary group of actors. His cast includes not only a star of the skill and ubiquitous box-office appeal of James Mason, but such admirable old-time Abbey Theatre favorites as Maureen Delany, Dennis O'Dea, W. C.

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Fay, and the late (and with apologies to *Time*), great F. J. McCormick.

What is more, Mr. Reed does not pretty them up. They wear clothes, not costumes; expressions instead of make-up; and are uncontaminated by beauticians. They belong to city streets and pubs and tenements rather than to movie lots. The measure of their acting ability is the completeness with which they hide that they are acting at all.

Mr. Mason's performance is the more remarkable when one considers the extent to which the scenario fails to come to Mr. Mason's assistance. The leader he plays is left unexplained and unmotivated. From beginning to end he is a shadow in a shadowy world of reality. Until he erupts unconvincingly into a Biblical quotation, he is merely a man who holds up a mill, is wounded and pursued. His character does not alter; the inner processes of his mind fail to make themselves felt. Only his bleeding body weakens. Yet somehow, by the adroitness with which he suggests the external anguishes of a fugitive, Mr. Mason does manage to center the interest of the film.

Having projected so much of his narrative stirringly in distinctive movie terms, it is regrettable that Mr. Reed has not made the whole of "Odd Man Out" as good as are its parts. Its better interludes, however, do more than tell an exciting story excitingly. In themselves they are welcome proofs of what a motion picture can be when it happens to have been made by a man of taste, invention, and imagination, who has a rightful respect for the medium of his choice.

JOHN MASON BROWN.

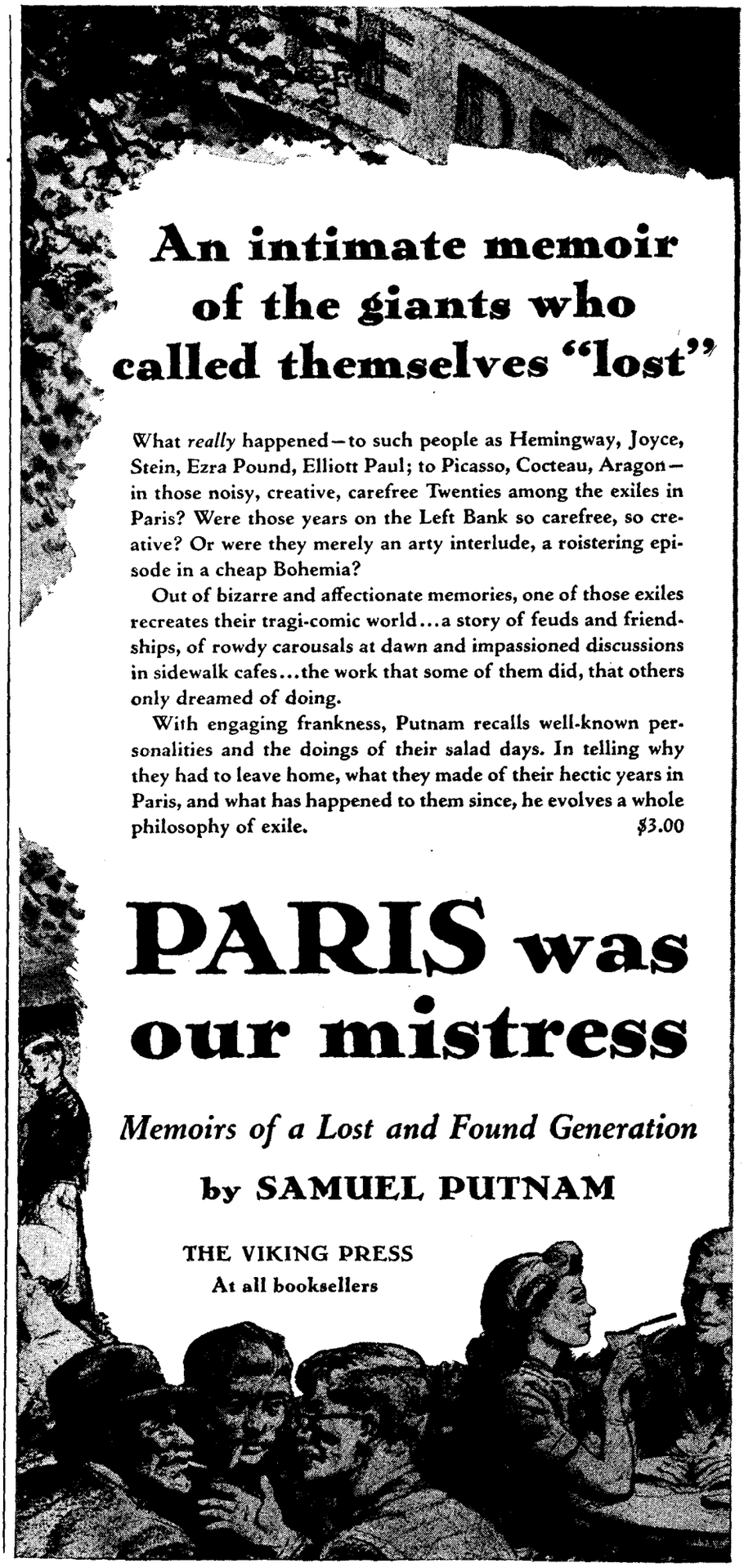
Insurrection

By Harold Zlotnik

LOVE and a restive dream
Subvert the mind:
Its fortresses and moats
Armed feelings find
Defenseless as the startled stars
Whose light the javelin sunrise jars.

Love and a restive dream
Will decimate
The stratagems and foes
That minds create:
The sophistries or running feet,
The syllogisms of retreat.

O who can say that love
Which feeds the fire
And dreams that fan the flame
At the mind's pyre
Never know the reason
For their mental treason?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Fable, Fantasy, and Pagan Pipes

GARGANTUA'S MOUTH. By Royal Murdoch. New York: The Fine Edition Press. 1947. 108 *pp.* $2.50.

RIP VAN WINKLE'S DREAM. By Jeannette Michael Haien. New York: Doubleday & Co. 1947. 95 *pp.* $2.50.

A LITTLE TREASURY OF GREAT POETRY. Edited by Oscar Williams. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1947. 766 *pp.* $3.75.

DARK OF THE MOON. Edited by August Derleth. New York: Arkham House. 1947. 418 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by ALFRED KREYMBORG

ROYAL MURDOCH, born in California about fifty years ago, and a fur-cutter by trade, has borrowed the title of his first book of poems from Celia in "As You Like It": "You must borrow me Gargantua's Mouth first: 'tis a word too great for any mouth of this age's size." While the poet does not meet this injunction throughout and his work is uneven, he makes his public bow with disarming exuberance. His virtues are pagan rather than Christian and reveal an absolute fondness for nudity, physical or mental. There is a poem on our latest craze existentialism, a surrealist sequence, a war group, lyrics and sonnets, ballads and translations, and a vein of hearty satire for which he might be suppressed by respectable citizens—*vide* "The Disrobing," "A Poem About Democracy," "Atomic Bomb." And academic sonneteers will question the subject and style of "Sick-Night Sonnet":

I have, you have, and we and they and it:
There is the verb that you must conjugate
If you would be a credit to the state
And not be known as useless and unfit:
So gather in the talons of your wit
And strike for dollars, let them be your fate:
Beauty then will bed with you for mate,
And at your dinner kings and queens will sit.
But if you choose to dwell among the poor
And pass your days with those who have no bread
And little raiment to keep the cold away,
Your lips will never kiss the Kohinoor,
Nor when you die will very much be said
Nor priests make pause to genuflect and pray.

Jeannette Michael Haien's "Rip Van Winkle's Dream," which received the annual Avery Hopwood Award, will prove disappointing to lovers of narrative poetry. First of all it suffers by comparison with Irving's poetic fable in prose and by its failure to surmount Poe's judgment against any long poem. Whenever it touches on nature, or the background of Rip's long dream, the style is more certain and the versification as well. Yet even here there is much too much nature and not enough human nature. There is also the type of philosophy which, as Goethe observed, obscured and ruined many good poets in the past, German or otherwise. And since the old Olympian was aware of this tendency in himself, his word is an excellent warning to other philosophic poets.

There is no end to the craze for further anthologies, or for books designed for larger public consumption. And as long as Palgrave's "Golden Treasury" heads the popular list there will always be attempts to surpass it in taste, if not in sales. The industrious Oscar Williams has now followed up "A Little Treasury of Modern Poetry" with the companion "A Little Treasury of Great Poetry," containing more than 500 "great" English and American poems of seven centuries, designed for the reader "whose purpose in buying a book of this sort is to have a convenient volume that allows for constant reading wherever he may be." The volume is arranged under various headings so the reader may "find interest in different treatments of different themes" by poets from different ages, and closes with "A Little Treasury of Jabberwocky," a generous selection of nonsense verse in the shadow of Lewis Carroll. Oscar Williams has solved the dilemma of all anthologists "by putting in his own favorites," a choice to which he is entitled. But the choice of the title "great" is far too pretentious and sweeping and breaks down under detailed examination. There are poems here which are great indeed, and others which are good or not so good, and things which aren't poetry at all.

August Derleth, another industrious poet, has edited an anthology, "Dark of the Moon," which is confined to poems of fantasy and the macabre, a fascinating theme in any age. In his modest introduction, he reveals that the largest market for poets today may be found in magazines entirely devoted to these and kindred themes. The book is composed of border ballads and of poems by cultivated poets whose work in extending balladry into art rarely equals or surpasses the primitive minstrels. A good deal of space is given to some half dozen contributors to the magazine *Weird Tales*, and to some eight pages by the editor, a specialist in this field. The best of our youthful balladists, Byron Herbert Reece, is likewise included. There are, however, a number of notable absentees who might well have enhanced the volume by replacing a number of "weak sisters." Yet the book is attractive enough to be worthy of private or market-place readers.

A Valid Talent

THE SILVER FAWN. By David Russell. Dallas, Texas: The Kaleidograph Press. 1946. 92 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by I. L. SALOMON

POET-LAUREATES are always endangering poetry; their commemorative verses have great heart and little else to commend them. David Russell, the representative of Texas by legislative enactment, is no exception. "The Silver Fawn," the latest of three books in four years, is overwritten; the devotional and anniversary pieces are decidedly old hat. And that is a pity, for David Russell is a poet who can achieve a splendid image; he is at his best in the brief lyric.

The title-poem has several fine stanzas; a little sharper self-criticism would eliminate a trite phrase or two; and the poem would then come into its own as an example of what David Russell can do, for he can create a mood. He does so in "Twilight on Matagorda Bay," concluding with "silver is the wonder/That over me comes rolling."

In the regional poems he is not averse to using a line from "America the Beautiful" : "from sea to shining sea"; and he has no objection to substituting plural pronouns in Emerson's fine line in "The Problem" : "he builded better than he knew."

Despite his enthusiasm for the Lone Star State, David Russell should not permit his heart to overwhelm his mind. George Santayana and Robert P. Tristram Coffin have attested to the validity of his talent; he should keep to the short lyric and not disappoint them.

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Chinese Orphan

MR. ON LOONG. By Robert Standish. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1947. 326 pp. $3.

Reviewed by ANN F. WOLFE

ROBERT STANDISH is a prose stylist and a story-teller extraordinary. He has a deft hand for local color and an original touch in blending humor, charm, and excitement. He knows how to balance low life and high adventure.

The hero of Mr. Standish's new book is John On Loong, son of a Chinese laundryman in the West Indies. Orphaned at twelve, John is cast adrift on the tides of class distinction and race prejudice. He is the only member of his race on a small island ruled by the English and served by Negroes. To the former he is an inferior, to the latter an intruder.

In flight from a schoolmaster who orders him to believe in the catechism without comprehending it, the boy meets Captain Pierre Lorillard. In port Pierre is the traditional carousing sailor; aboard his schooner he is a philosopher and a scholar. He becomes a second father to the orphan, guiding him into commercial life and helping him in the slow climb to business leadership and a position of dignity and honor in the Caribbean community.

The story opens in 1913 and closes soon after the death of John's aviator son in the Second World War. The hero's life is closely involved with the career of Pierre's Martinique mistress and that of her daughter Laurette. Both ladies are warm-blooded, aphrodisiac, and skilled in the arts of venery. Laurette, no believer in art for art's sake, makes an international success of her social talents. Her Hollywood-ending reformation is the major flaw in the book.

"Mr. On Loong" was written primarily—and successfully—for entertainment. Yet for all the frangipani, the palms and the trade winds, the reader must face class and racial conflict in the West Indies, peasant starvation in China, decadence and corruption in Europe's high places. The author's quiet satire overlooks neither the immemorial ways of American cruise tourists nor the tragi-comic Colonel Blimps.

To one reader, the most memorable character in the book is John's father, the laundryman. "He loved the long free strokes of the iron, the sense of well-being which came as the dull matt surface surrendered to gleaming ribbons of splendor. . . ." If that is not occupational poetry, it is at least notable writing.

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Trends Analyzed and Prophesied

CYCLES: The Science of Prediction. By Edward R. Dewey and Edwin F. Dakin. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1947. 237 pp. $3.

Reviewed by DAVID CUSHMAN COYLE

DEWEY and Dakin argue that there is a tide in the affairs of men, whether we know the causes for it or not—or even if the causes are entirely unknowable. As they say, if the earth had nine moons and were always wrapped in fog, the ocean tides would look more mysterious than they do now; but they might be predictable by wave analysis, once they were assumed to be periodic. Chief emphasis is placed on four rather well-authenticated economic waves. First is a fifty-four-year wave, showing most plainly in wholesale prices.

Its latest peak was in 1925, and its low points 1898 and 1952. Next is a nine-year wave of commodity and stock prices. This one had lows about 1923, 1932, and 1941. It was high in 1946 and is due to be low about 1950. There seems to be also a three-and-one-half-year wave in production and prices, chiefly important when it adds a sharp point to the tops and bottoms of longer waves on which it rides. Finally, there is the well-known and powerful eighteen-year wave in building. All the principal waves point down until about 1951, after which the tide sets in toward prosperity, for a while.

The resemblance to astrology is much like the resemblance of modern psychology to medieval magic. Undoubtedly there are periodicities in human life, and some, such as getting up and going to bed, are unquestionably related to astronomic happenings. The authors of this book believe that many of the observed economic waves depend on regular periodic swings of human nature, between a disposition toward activity, and a tendency to retreat and depression. So far as the idea is valid, these swings are not caused by previous behavior, and therefore, when business curves are distorted by a war, they snap back into the old wave series without losing step.

The authors also call attention to the growth curves of American business, most of which are far along into maturity. These are not waves; they are the result of previous growth, and they never turn backward toward youth. The successes of the past are no comfort, because a vigorous youth is what old age is made of. The effect of flat or falling growth-lines is to make the downswing of the waves particularly nasty, and the upswing generally disappointing. The tendency of growth-lines to turn downward is confirmed by another analysis, of employment as a percentage of population, in a forthcoming book by Alfred G. Norris. The conclusion is that only a rebirth will set off a new series of youthful trends in America.

This is a tough book. Apparently, if the Government is to fill in much of the predicted sink in the natural business curve in the next ten years, it will have to have much bigger shovels than Roosevelt ever had. Instead of which, Congress talks of tax reduction, in itself a symptom of sagging national vitality. And if America is to renew its youth, we may need something as revolutionary as, say, a real attack on monopoly and restoration of free enterprise, if we don't want the opposite.

Our "Neighbor"

AUSTRALIA: Its Resources & Development. Edited by G. L. Wood. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1947. 324 pp. $4.

Reviewed by HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

THIS is a very valuable book. It is factual, intended to be informative, rather than descriptive. But it is just what is needed to give us up-to-date information about a country coming into closer and closer relationship to our own. It has been written by a group of "scientists, scholars, and public officials," and covers the industrial and agricultural status of the commonwealth, with supplementary chapters on wages, the power of the federal government, and the population problem. There has been no other good book on Australia since Hartley Grattan's "Introducing Australia" (1942), written before Japan threatened Australia. That was a more descriptive and more readable book, but this is more useful for reference and of course much more relevant to the present situation in Australia. There is a good index and good maps.

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Interim Report

THE ISLAND WAR: THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS IN THE PACIFIC. By Frank G. Hough, U.S.M.C.R. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1947. 413 pp. $5.

Reviewed by
BRIG. GEN. DONALD ARMSTRONG

HISTORY of warfare includes nearly as many atrocities as war itself. We have been treated to excited and even hysterical accounts based on distorted and inadequate knowledge. We have marveled at the writer who indignantly discovered that wars were fought for political ends. While certain novel experiments in writing authentic history by interviewing survivors on ground lately won have given excellent results, many histories might be classified as public relations jobs, inclined to be uncritical and undiscriminating. Although Major Hough's narrative of the United States Marines in action is to be classed in the last category, it is certainly superior in style, form, and substance. The author disclaims any pretension of writing definitive history so soon after the event. He has based his work on official reports, but he adds that he himself compiled certain documents of that description and implies the probability of error in such work. His commendable frankness encourages acceptance of his book as an interim report on the valiant and valuable contribution of the Marine Corps to victory in the Pacific.

Major Hough served in the Marine Corps in both world wars. He includes in his story all the factors that ought to be noted but are too frequently omitted, such as strength of both sides, description of terrain, weather, weapons, and equipment, tactical and strategic considerations. Photographs and maps provide useful aids in following the course of events.

The Major writes that the Marines "largely conceived, developed, and perfected" amphibious tactics, and in making this claim he is fully justified. In the two decades before Pearl Harbor, the Marine Corps devised a well-balanced and integrated mobile striking force. In successive maneuvers they developed landing craft, methods of operation, and suitable organization for amphibious warfare. They can be proud of their foresight for their specialty was instrumental in turning back the Japanese.

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SHALL WE SUFFER MORE EMIGRES?

(*Continued from page 16*)

stream, and of the geographical and occupational distribution, institutional connections, agency affiliations, etc., of the immigrants in this country. These will be valuable source materials for future students of this field, but need not detain us here.

Some of the most illuminating sections of the book deal with the varying problems of adjustment, economic and social, as they developed in connection with different occupational groups, businessmen and manufacturers, professors and scientists, artists and writers, and others. Here, again, there were necessarily great divergencies among individuals. Some persons who had had prosperous businesses abroad, particularly if they were able to bring considerable sums of money with them, were able to establish similar or related concerns in this country; others were forced to drop back into inferior or menial occupations of various sorts. Salesmen found it relatively easy to transfer their skills to the new environment; lawyers found it very difficult. The language barrier was obviously much greater in the case of certain professions than of others—the artist, for instance, found it much simpler to establish himself than the writer. Special attention was given to the case of physicians and dentists, partly because this group had aroused an exceptional amount of criticism and opposition. Indeed, it was deemed desirable to circulate a special questionnaire for these professions. It appears that the actual number of refugees of this type was not large—around 5,000—but that they did create some concrete problems on account of differences in professional training and background, in types of certification, in their attitude toward fees and advertising, etc. On the whole, the book gives the impression that the resulting evils are not of great proportions.

This kind of book puts the reviewer on the spot. As Mr. Davie says, "It is essentially a fact-finding investigation." The facts are vital. The literary style, the methods of presentation, the scheme of organization are all important. But it is the factual material that it presents that constitutes its justification. And it is upon this material that it must be judged. But no one really knows these facts except the author, or those who have worked with him. If the facts were available elsewhere there would be no excuse for making the study. The reviewer, on the basis of his own knowledge, may recognize some of the alleged facts as at least questionable; but he cannot possibly pass judgment on the great body of facts itself. Such a book, accordingly, must practically be taken on faith—faith in the competence and integrity of the director of the study and all who work with him, in the validity of the materials used, and in the scientific soundness of the methods followed.

THERE are, however, numerous tests that may be applied, some drawn from the internal evidence of the particular volume, some based on the circumstances that surround the prosecution of every such undertaking, and some derived from general available knowledge of the field in question. On account of the great importance of Mr. Davie's book it is expedient that some of these tests be applied. "efugees in America" is especially important, not only because of the position it will hold in the literature of the field, but more immediately because it will unquestionably be used as a source of arguments in connection with the present move to admit 400,000 additional refugees to this country.

First comes the question of backing. Who financed this investigation? This is a question that every scholar asks almost automatically at the very outset. Mr. Davie does not tell us. (Incidentally, he does not tell us the time period within which the investigation was carried out.) He does give us the names of the main com-

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1. "For Whom the Bell Tolls," Ernest Hemingway. 2. "The Miracle of the Bells," Russell Janney. 3. "The Egg and I," Betty MacDonald. 4. "Forever Amber," Kathleen Winsor. 5. "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn," Betty Smith. 6. "Peace of Mind," Joshua Liebman. 7. "Main Street," Sinclair Lewis. 8. "Lydia Bailey," Kenneth Roberts. 9. "Gone with the Wind," Margaret Mitchell. 10. "Manhattan Transfer," John Dos Passos. 11. "Low Man on a Totem Pole," H. Allen Smith. 12. "Topper," Thorne Smith. 13. "The Grapes of Wrath," John Steinbeck. 14. "B. F.'s Daughter," John P. Marquand. 15. "Brideshead Revisited," Evelyn Waugh. 16. "Out of the Night," Jan Valtin. 17. "Under Cover," John Roy Carlson. 18. "Serenade," James Cain. 19. "The Age of Jackson," A. M. Schlesinger, Jr. 20. "Show Boat," Edna Ferber. 21. "How to Read a Book," Mortimer Adler. 22. "Lost Horizon," James Hilton. 23. "God Is My Co-Pilot," Robert L. Scott. 24. "Guadalcanal Diary," Richard Tregaskis. 25. "Kings Row," Henry Bellaman.

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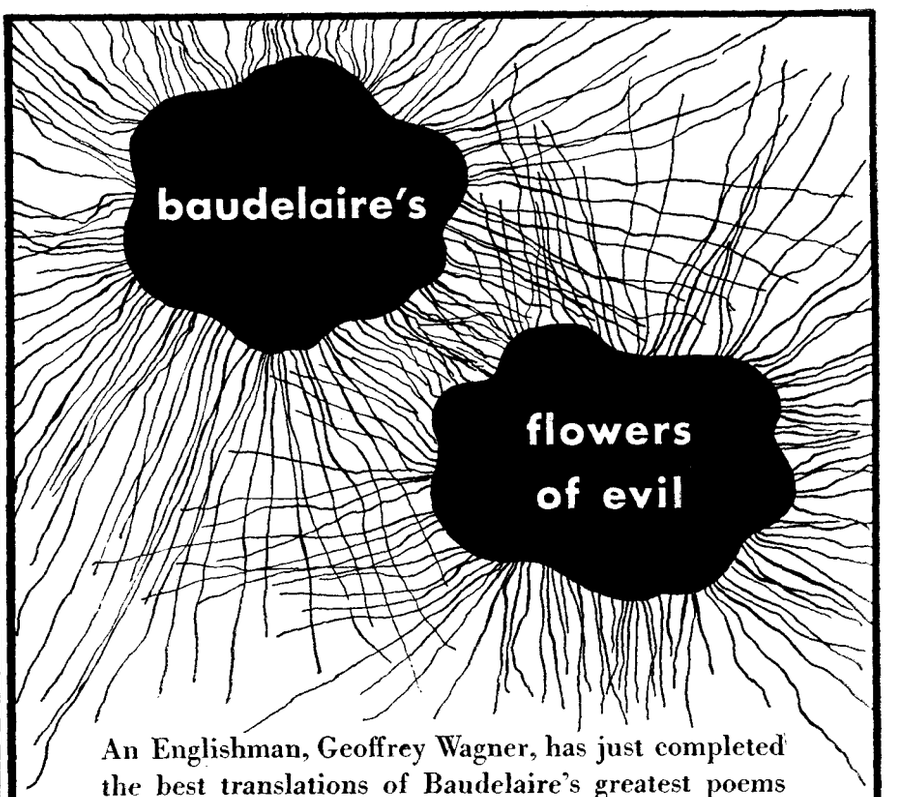
mittee, of the staff, and of a very extensive sponsors' committee, of which the present reviewer is one. He also tells us that the project was "Sponsored by the American Christian Committee for Refugees, the American Friends Service Committee, the Catholic Committee for Refugees, the National Refugee Service, and the United Committee for the Care of European Children," (flyleaf) and extends his acknowledgments to "the several hundred national and local agencies participating in the study." Since all these organizations, presumably, are devoted to promoting the welfare of refugees it appears that this study was not only sponsored, but participated in, by the very bodies the success of whose work was being appraised. A situation like this imposes a tremendous pressure on the director of the study to make it come out the way its backers want it to. (This reviewer knows, because he has been there.) It is possible to resist this pressure. But a research like this necessarily involves a vast amount of selection. Materials must be sifted for acceptance or rejection, documents must be edited and cut, pieces of evidence must be appraised for emphasis, position, and interpretation. It takes almost superhuman firmness on the part of the director to avoid even unconscious slanting of his findings in the direction of the wishes and interests of his supporters, particularly if it happens that his own personal inclinations tend in the same direction.

NEXT comes the matter of methodology. In "Refugees in America" three main sources of information were used, questionnaires, personal interviews, and reports from agencies. The questionnaire method of sociological investigation has achieved wide use in the United States in recent years. It has much to recommend it. In some cases it is the only technique available. But it has its weaknesses. It rests upon two fundamental assumptions, first, that the sample is adequate and representative (it is practically never possible to test every individual in the group), and second, that the respondent has the honesty, accuracy, and objectivity to supply scientifically reliable data. There is always the chance that a selective factor may be working in the return of the questionnaires. For instance, in the present case 50,000 questionnaires were sent out, 11,233 were returned, and 11,107 were used. What do we know about the 38,767 individuals who did not return their questionnaires? Is there a chance that, on the whole, they represent the less successful, the less well-



An Englishman, Geoffrey Wagner, has just completed the best translations of Baudelaire's greatest poems that have ever been made. They are published by New Directions, with the French originals facing the English versions. Introduction by Enid Starkie. $1.50

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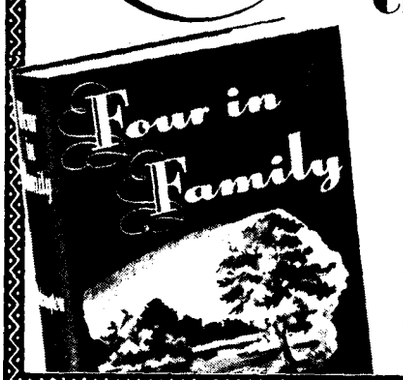

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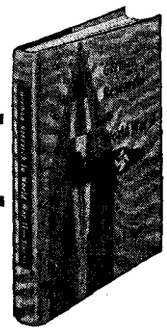

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adjusted, the less cooperative elements? Who knows? And what do we know of the 400,000 to whom no questionnaires were sent? Also in the actual filling out of the questionnaires, is there a possible place for the operation of that well-nigh universal human trait that seeks to put up the best possible front, even anonymously (the questionnaires did not have to be signed)?

And since so much of the work was done through agencies, it is pertinent at least to raise the question whether those individuals who did not establish relations with agencies may differ in some important respects from those who did.

The personal interview technique, being of necessity much more limited in scope than the questionnaire, offers even more play for the selective factor. A total of 200 life stories offers much vivid material, but is more useful in *illustrating* points than in *proving* them.

FINALLY, as a hurdle in the way of complete scientific objectivity, there is the very liberal spirit itself. After all, are not these refugees human beings? Are they not the products of one of the most terrible tragedies that the human race has ever known? Is it not merely fair and reasonable that they should be given every possible break, and that the way should be made as easy as possible for others of their kind to experience the blessings of transference to a more fortunate land? Is it a just criticism of the book that it gives the impression of resolving almost every doubt on the side of the success of the great undertaking?

Last October, by invitation, Mr. Davie presented a summary of his findings before a small but select population conference held in New York City. The question was vigorously raised by the specialists present whether he had not painted too rosy a picture of the situation. He defended his position ably, but it is to be surmised that some lingering doubts still remained.

In seeking the final and wider interpretation of this vast body of data every reader is entitled to apply whatever knowledge, logical faculty, and intuition he may possess. Eventual national procedure should rest firmly on the results.

One principle that receives admirable confirmation in Mr. Davie's work is the quantitative element in inter-group attitudes. Illustrative of several statements are the following: "A high degree of concentration draws undue attention to a group . . . often retards assimilation, and sometimes gives rise to fear, dislike, and other unfavorable reactions." "The tendency to have American friends is

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Title and Author	*Crime, Place, and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
PLANT ME NOW *Miriam-Ann Hagen* (Crime Club: $2.)	Transcontinental tourist train carries batch of odd characters, including ample killer-bait. Youthful hep-cats help nonplused detective subdue double slayer.	Jitterbug slang soon gets chintzy, altho twosome who sling it are definitely on beam. Plot and action follow standard procedures.	Non-essential reading
COME AND BE KILLED *Shelley Smith* (Harpers: $2.50)	Neurotic sister of English actress falls into clutches of amiable mass murderess. Actress finally convinces bored police of crime and gets action.	Expertly contrived and deftly written chiller. No mystery about slayer's identity, but events leading up to her downfall are hackle-raising.	Admirable
SAN FRANCISCO MURDERS *Joseph Henry Jackson, editor* (Duell, Sloan & Pearce: $3).	Octet of authors, including Boucher, Offord, and Teilhet, describe and analyze historic (1870) and contemporary (1936) Golden Gate goriness.	Ten famous cases expertly reconstructed and revived without too much literary embroidery. Second best bet in worthy "Regional Murder" series.	Absorbing
SEND NO FLOWERS *Gavin Holt* (Howell, Soskin: $2.50)	Demobbed English private-op. Tyler, in butler's guise, can't prevent fatal sequel to nine-year-old London crime—but solves it handily.	Capitally plotted and crisply charactered. Double mystery holds up excellently. "Ritzy" Tyler worthwhile addition to clever and sardonically humorous sleuths.	High-grade

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most marked in the case of those refugees who live in neighborhoods where there are no other recent immigrants." It is a general rule that antipathy increases directly with the size of the minority group.

This principle obviously has an important bearing on the whole question of the long-time desirability of admitting largely increased numbers of foreigners, no matter how compelling the immediate urgency may seem to be. True liberalism looks far into the future, and concentrates on ultimate effects, as far as they can be foreseen. A superficial, non-analytical, emotional humanitarianism runs grave danger of defeating the very ends it seeks to serve. We have to reckon with people as they are, not as we wish they were, or think they ought to be. Anti-foreignism in general, and anti-Semitism in particular, are deep-seated and revolting features of American group psychology. If the admission of an undue quantity of the raw material on which they feed has the effect of intensifying them, and perhaps whipping them up into some form of violent expression, mankind in general will have been ill-served thereby.

National solidarity and unity are vitally important factors in these days of international adjustment. They are also extremely delicate and sensitive ones. They are not to be dealt with in terms of the simple numerical averages of the quantities involved. A single discordant element may have a deleterious effect far out of proportion to its actual size. For example, that relatively small, rich, and fashionable section of the refugees whom Mr. Davie refers to as the "bei-uns" and which is more familiarly known as the "bei-unskis," by its ostentation, arrogance, and snobbishness, is creating a degree of ill-will toward foreigners in general far out of proportion to its actual numbers.

Likewise, the immediate interpretation of a phenomenon is not necessarily the correct one. Thus when Mr. Davie says, "refugee businessmen have opened up employment opportunities for both Americans and refugees" he necessarily implies one of two things: either these workers were drawn from other jobs, in which case where is the gain, or else they were lifted out of a reservoir of unemployment. But if there was such a reservoir, what becomes of the equally popular "liberal" argument that immigrant workers do not increase unemployment among the wage-earners already in the country? Of course there may be cases where the refugee businessman creates employment opportunities roughly equivalent to the number of laborer immigrants from his own or some other country, which may, or may not, represent a net gain to the United States. For instance, the much publicized Jan Bata shoe company, to which Mr. Davie refers without criticism, has been under heavy fire for its labor policies and its law violations, as well as for its connections with the German Nazis.

The immigration problem is an exceedingly complex and difficult one, calling for the application of all the scientific knowledge and factual information, as well as the human sympathy and understanding, that can be marshaled. Mistakes in handling it will have far-reaching and incalculable effects. The refugee situation has not altered any of the fundamental principles. There was a time during the great fight for restriction in the early part of this century when it seemed that the American public was better educated on immigration than on any other great issue. Similar educational competence is urgently needed today. If, in the end, it seems expedient to open wider the doors for the sake of suffering foreigners, let us do it with our eyes open, fully aware of the price we may have to pay, deliberately prepared to pay it, but determined to reduce it to the smallest possible dimensions.

Henry Pratt Fairchild, NYU, professor emeritus of sociology, is author of "Main Street: The American Town, Past and Present."

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THE FINE ARTS

GERTRUDE STEIN AND THE ARTISTS

YALE UNIVERSITY is showing in its Sterling Memorial library a selection of letters, pamphlets, and photographs from its collection of Gertrude Stein's literary remains. It is a fascinating display, and it makes clear how wise Yale was to encourage the bequest. I suppose the question of Miss Stein's intrinsic quality as a writer is still debated, but there can be no doubt about her influence. She was, in fact, a sort of Typhoid Mary of prose style, infecting in some degree a lively percentage of those who came within range of her wondrously commonsensical mind. Even those who abuse her have sometimes felt her power. I remember, for instance, reading a book review in which a critic tried first to damage her by parody and disconnected quotation. He ended by writing with her cadence, when he was trying to say in his own manner how foolish she was.

The current Yale exhibition has a number of high spots as to recent literary history, and though these are not my business, I cannot resist mentioning one or two. There is Alfred Stieglitz's letter of February 26, 1912, arranging with Miss Stein for the publication of her pieces on Matisse and Picasso in a special number of *Camera Work*—the first of her writing on art to be issued here. There is a letter from Ernest Hemingway, written from Spain in the early 1920's; he therein confesses how difficult writing is for him, but adds that it had seemed easy before he met her. There is an exchange of letters between Miss Stein and F. Scott Fitzgerald. "You make a modern world and a modern orgy," she wrote him regarding "The Great Gatsby," and his grateful reply is laced with the self-castigation which eventually destroyed him. There are letters of varying interest from many eminent writers, among them Arnold Bennett, James Stephens, T. S. Eliot, Edith Sitwell, Ezra Pound, Robert Graves, Thornton Wilder and Carl Van Vechten (who are said to have acquired the collection for Yale), Guillaume Apollinaire, and Jean Cocteau.

Nearly all these letters pay tribute to Miss Stein as a writer and as a friend. Some of them seem to suggest that her devotion to modern painting communicated itself to certain novelists who might otherwise have remained indifferent to the visual arts. Thus Hemingway declared that he was trying to describe Spain as Cézanne had described France, and soon he was to become one of the most perspicacious collectors of contemporary art, buying important pictures by Juan Gris and Miro's early masterwork, "The Farm." Henry McBride once remarked, apropos of exhibitions by two of Miss Stein's protégés, that it must be very hard to paint unless you knew Gertrude Stein. Seemingly it was hard *not* to paint if you did know her, for we find Sherwood Anderson writing her in 1923 that he was spending his afternoons painting and was more excited than by writing. And William Saroyan in 1934 sent her a group of sprightly abstract drawings and was convinced, if briefly, that he drew better than he wrote.

The letters from Miss Stein's painter-friends are less interesting on the whole than those from writers, as might be expected. Some of them, indeed, are so plain that I am reminded of the story the American artist Ben Shahn tells about his early years in Paris. Young and awe-struck, he saw Picasso and Derain sitting together at a café table. He edged his way slowly toward them, and got near enough to hear what he supposed would be the Revelation in art matters. They were saying:

"Tell me, have you eaten?"

"No, I haven't eaten. Where does one eat around here?"

"I don't know."

A number of Miss Stein's and her

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brother Leo's letters from artists follow this amiable tenor, their authors relaxing after the intense creative labors which so wholly absorbed them. Perhaps the painters felt a certain constraint in writing Miss Stein, unlike the literary men who quite generally dressed for the occasion. Possibly this was a wise course for artists to follow, since Miss Stein was a savage guardian of her profession. "Things belong to you," she said, "and writing belonged to me, there is no doubt about it writing belonged to me." She particularly disliked intruders from other fields, and when Picasso deserted painting for poetry in the mid-1930's, she became so angry that she grabbed him by the lapels and shook him hard, as she has told in "Everybody's Autobiography."

There are, however, a number of valuable documents among the letters from artists. One of these is a letter from Picasso to Leo Stein in which he describes and sketches a major canvas of his early career, then in progress. The picture is the "Peasants and Oxen" belonging now to the Barnes Foundation. It is a key work in Picasso's evolution toward cubism, and the letter should settle the controversy as to when it was painted and where. Also included in the Yale exhibition are several letters from Juan Gris, lately the subject of an exceptionally fine monograph by Henry Kahnweiler, the devoted, scholarly dealer who supported the cubists during the critical period of their revolution. A 1922 letter from Gris tells graphically how precarious a gamble painting is, even for a mature artist. Five years earlier Gris had written Miss Stein describing the painful ill health which killed him at forty. Alongside the letter is shown the printed announcement of his funeral services, May 1927, with means of transportation listed in a footnote, in the practical French fashion. It was Gris's tragic death that inspired Miss Stein to write one of the most eloquent of her many pieces on art, "The Life and Death of Juan Gris."

It must be admitted that Miss Stein sometimes said uncertain things too firmly, though one of the good points about common sense, so conspicuously her quality, is that it does not always need to be true so long as it is usually. Thus when she tired of Matisse and Braque, but continued to revere Picasso and Gris, she was prompted to make a broad generalization. "The whole nineteenth century was created as painting by France," she wrote in "An American and France," "and I wonder why but anyway it is. There is no getting away from it. At the end of the century it became Spanish. . . ." The supporting evidence for this contention is not negligible, but it is by no means incontrovertible, considering the number of extremely important artists produced during both centuries by France, England, Germany, and our own country, among others. Moreover, changing taste may soon sterilize the grain of half-truth in Miss Stein's statement, for it is not hard to envision a day, perhaps already here, when the paintings of the German romantic Caspar David Friedrich will be looked at as eagerly as those of Delacroix, or when Klee, Henry Moore, and de Chirico (not to mention Matisse and Braque) will rank near Picasso, or when the younger American artists will seem more exciting than those of continental Europe. But shifts in taste were not Miss Stein's concern; being strong, she belonged to her period completely.

Like nearly all collectors, she was capable of appreciating to the full only one generation of living artists, and after saying in 1936 that painting had become Spanish at the end of the nineteenth century, she added as to its later status: "and now well just now we cannot worry about it." She did try, however, to understand the younger generation of painters in Paris. Her books and her letters at Yale testify that she knew and encouraged a number of artists who have taken leading rank in recent years — Miro, Masson, Tchelitchew, Bérard, Dali, Berman, and so on. Indeed it was probably her eagerness for change which made her overlook the many fine painters who continued earlier twentieth-century traditions instead of reacting away from them. Anyway, she quickly had enough of the young, with few exceptions, and the only one whose works she bought in quantity was Sir Francis Rose, talented perhaps, but not the caliber of those she dismissed after a brief period of enthusiasm.

When she came over here to lec-

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ture in the late 1930's, she said that she was interested in seeing only American painting, but I doubt that she paid much attention to what was shown her. Her heart was with the brilliant School of Paris of the earlier decades. She has been criticized for this, I think unfairly. For if American painting begins to assume a more important international position, it is as much because she and others provided a link with foreign traditions as because men like Stieglitz stayed at home and fought for our artists on national grounds. Great vitality emanated from Gertrude Stein's collection on the rue de Fleurus, and she more than any other important American literary figure made painting and painters her prose subjects.

I imagine we are stuck with the phrase "literary remains." The Stein collection at Yale denies the phrase's mortuary stain. It is lively, impressive, and moving.

JAMES THRALL SOBY.

More About Melville

CALL ME ISHMAEL. By Charles Olson. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock. 1947. 119 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by WILLARD THORP

THIS is a book to rejoice those admirers of Melville who like to identify him with Ahab. It will have a quite different impact on the scholars and critics who have been trying to disperse the fogs which the myth-makers have been sending up around Melville for the past quarter of a century.

Mr. Olson prints for the first time a valuable Melville document (his notes written in a copy of Chase's "Narrative of the . . . Shipwreck of the Whale-Ship Essex") and reprints, with modifications, most of his own important article on "Lear and Moby-Dick" which was published in *Twice a Year* in 1938. Besides this highly useful material, "Call Me Ishmael" consists for the most part of scraps of information about the whaling industry in the late 1840's; unproved conjectures, presented as certainties, about two "Moby-Dicks" (the first of which "did not contain Ahab" and may not have contained Moby-Dick); and—in the last forty pages—an expansion of the thesis that "Melville wanted a god" and that in his search for one, "Christ, a Holy Ghost, Jehovah" never satisfied him.

For Mr. Olson, Melville's career after "Moby-Dick" was a sad falling off. His male characters, after Ahab, are abstractions, like Pierre, or epicene, like Billy Budd. There is no health in them. Earlier, Melville could "face up to Moses." Then he got lost in the world of the New Testament, and the rest was decline and fall.

The assertion that sometime in the course of writing "Moby-Dick" (Mr. Olson believes the time was the summer of 1850) Melville changed his conception of the book needs to be scrutinized carefully. This possibility has been suggested before by two scholars, Leon Howard and Harrison Hayford, though neither felt warranted in doing more than offering the idea as a conjecture. The case rests, so far as I can see, on two references to the novel made in the early months of Melville's work on it. On May 1, 1850, Melville wrote R. H. Dana that he was half way in his work about a whaling voyage. In August 1850 Evert Duyckinck wrote his brother George that Melville "has a new book mostly done . . . a most enjoyable presentment of the Whale Fishery—something quite new." What is puzzling here is the fact that a book "mostly done" by August 1850 should not have been finished until a year later.

As I read the evidence there is little to warrant the guess that the delay was caused by a rewriting of the book on a new plan and under the influence of Shakespeare. (Melville's enthusiasm for Shakespeare began early in 1849.) The two letters referred to above suggest sufficiently well that the book was not going to be a simple, factual account of the whale fishery. Melville told Dana that it would be a "strange sort of book" and that to cook the thing up he was having to throw in a "little fancy, which from the nature of the thing, must be ungainly as the gambols of the whales themselves." There are more satisfactory ways than Mr. Olson's to account for Melville's delay in finishing "Moby-Dick"—for one thing, the state of his eyes during the winter of 1850-1851. Unless some solid evidence is educed to substantiate this hypothesis of a replanned and rewritten novel, Melville's biographers should beware of Mr. Olson's flat assertion that "Moby-Dick" was two books.

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NEW EDITIONS

EVERYONE reads William Blake's lyrics with pleasure, while all but a few hardy souls throw up their hands in the face of his Prophetic Books.

One of the hardiest of these souls is S. Foster Damon, whose "William Blake," first published by Houghton Mifflin in 1924, and now reissued by Peter Smith ($12.50), remains the most helpful guide to Blake's maze that has yet been produced. Mr. Damon may go a bit far in assuring us that, "when ten or twelve of Blake's names [Los, Urthona, Urizen, and the like] are memorized, even the longest of the Prophetic Books becomes comparatively simple." He is closer to truth, I think, when he says that "a sympathetic intuition, not a glossary, must be our guide." And he speaks nothing but the truth when he says: "Consideration for the reader was not among Blake's intentions."

However, Mr. Damon does all that a guide can do, and I know that I, for one, understand "The Book of Urizen," "The Four Zoas," "Milton," "Jerusalem," and the rest, far better with his help than I could ever have understood these compositions without it. But even when one understands, or thinks one does, the act of literary judgment remains to be performed. How much of this mass of writing is poetry, how much mystical confusion, how much verbal nonsense? I have always thought that Blake buried gems of poetry in mountains of crude metal. I have sometimes been tempted to compare his more ambitious works with his grape vine, of which Mr. Damon writes: "For he had now a humble house of his own to which was appended a garden containing the famous grape vine, which Blake characteristically never allowed to be pruned; the result being much foliage, much tangle of long, leafless spirals, and the most insignificant grapes." But I know that Blake did prune his prophecies and epics, and I know that one should remember the lesson in humility which he taught when he wrote: "A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees." Or, as he puts it even more simply, even more greatly: "As a man is, so he sees."

Among recent additions to The Modern Library is "The Best of S. J. Perelman," with a Critical Introduction by Sidney Namlerep ($1.25). Mr. Perelman, as Fulton Market knows, combines the elegance of Theodore Dreiser with the power of Ronald Firbank, the daintiness of Dostoievsky with the incorruptible honesty of Trader Horn. But there is no need for details here, when Mr. Namlerep has spoken so sagely. If you read Namlerep backwards, it spells Nature's Gentleman.

"Father Malachy's Miracle," by Bruce Marshall, is an ingenious, amusing tale which is also warm with sentiment and instinct with wisdom. In "The World, the Flesh, and Father Smith" (Bantam Books, 25c), by the same author, there is no conspicuous ingenuity, but sentiment and wisdom are both there, with entertainment besides. If it is true that we are known by the company we keep, we can do no better than to companion Father Smith through the years from 1908 to 1942. This humble Catholic priest, who served his Lord in wayward Scotland, not only saw an era through; he also saw through an era, with understanding eyes.

The new Random House "Shakespeare" ($10), in four volmes, boxed, with comedies illustrated by Fritz Kredel and tragedies illustrated by Warren Chappell, is an excellent example of sound and simple bookmaking. The type is meant to be read, the page design is neat, the illustrations agreeable, and the binding stout. It should be added that text, notes, and glossary are all derived from reliable editions, even though these editions are not named. Reading Shakespeare today, one is conscious of the debate stimulated by Granville-Barker's "Preface to Shakespeare." What matters most in these plays: stagecraft or literature? But why should there be any debate? When we see Shakespeare, he is a master of stagecraft. When we read him, he is a poet without peer. And, by the way, if you want one of the most useful books written about Shakespeare, you should buy one of the briefest: G. B. Harrison's "Introducing Shakespeare" (Penguin Books, 25¢).

Other new and notable Penguins are James Cain's "Serenade" (his best, for my money); Edna Ferber's "Saratoga Trunk" (guaranteed Ferber); "Looking for a Bluebird," by Joseph Wechsberg (one of *The New Yorker's* most delightful contributors) and Henry James's "Daisy Miller and an International Incident."

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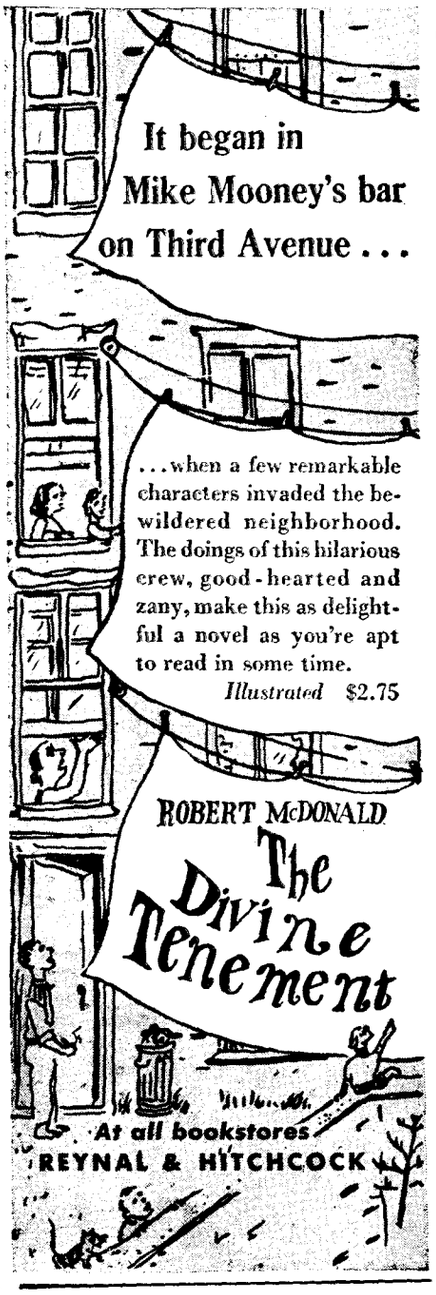
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M24

NON-FICTION AND THE CHROMOSOMES

(*Continued from page 8*)

taining no very unusual words, every reader will get the same meaning from them. That is a complete mistake. The purposes which are driving them the hardest at the moment will affect their understanding. Let me illustrate.

"Suppose a book opens with this statement. 'Fifty per cent of our housing is sub-standard.' You may or may not agree with the statement, but you think its meaning is clear. But a man who, at the moment, is concentrating all of his time on seeking new office quarters for his business to save it from disruption will almost surely give the sentence a different meaning. 'Housing' will include office buildings, and then 'sub-standard' will have a connotation quite different from yours."

"I see," said the Author, thoughtfully. "That does complicate matters. But what makes the senses work at all?"

"Go back to the genes and chromosomes. Remember they are constantly impelling you to *purposeful action.* The senses, all five, are constantly transmitting to you the evidence of the external world as a prognosis for the action you are about to take. The evidence which they transmit will be colored by the purpose you are trying to carry out.

"Let me put it this way. You'll admit, I'm sure, that the senses are always sharper when there is an immediate purpose. A student of French in our schools may find it almost impossible to understand or speak the language during years of study. His ear just can't catch the sounds well enough to guide his tongue in reproducing them. He will, however, continue to take in enough to carry out his purpose of passing an examination, which is quite different from a purpose to converse. Put that same student in France, where he has to understand and speak French in order to get around and get three meals a day, and the sense of hearing will begin to react in a way that amazes him."

"Of course. Any modern educator would agree to that."

"Well, all I am saying is that *every* action of the senses springs from a purpose. The purpose often isn't so clear. But it's there."

"You certainly have answers for everything today," said the Author. "Yet somehow I cannot believe that all purposeful action springs from the chromosome drives. If that were true, purposeful action ought to affect every reaction I have. How, for example, does it affect memory?"

"Purpose even has jurisdiction over the memory," said the Publisher. "If you have a good reason for remembering a fact, your memory will seldom let you down. Anything for which YOU believe there will be a purposeful use in the near future will be kept in the conscious memory. Things which YOU believe may be of great use to you, but only in the distant future, YOU try to keep in the conscious memory or at least at the top of the subconscious, where they can be easily pulled up. Things for which YOU see no great personal use, now or in the future, tend to get pushed way down in the subsconcious memory, and the longer they lie there the harder it is to recall them to the conscious memory."

"Now, all this bears directly on the picture of the possible readers for non-fiction books."

"I'm glad we've got to that at last," said the Author. "Now, I take it, the persuasion is going to start."

The Battle for the Reader's Attention

"Maybe it won't be successful, but I will start on it now. Let's begin by picturing the state of a man or woman—say yourself—who sits down and opens a non-fiction book or article.

"You recall that I said that you, as a prospective reader, are in a state of conflict. The external world may be pulling your attention away by radio dance music coming in through your window. Your subconscious will is possibly being stimulated by chromosome drives to urge you to call up a girl, or go out for a drink, or simply indulge in some day-dreaming. But for a moment your YOU has decided to focus your eyes on the pages of a book. From then on, those pages fight a battle with other conflicting desires to hold the reader's attention."

"You make it sound like a miracle that anyone ever reads a non-fiction book or article."

"Well, fortunately for both of us, people do. Some writers win the battle. The reader reads the words, understands the meaning, remembers the meaning, and sometimes acts. Let's see why this happens.

"It is commonly said that people read either for entertainment or information. Entertainment is obviously pursuit of pleasure. But why do people want information? I think you can make three general rules:

"First. A man or woman will al-

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ways read and remember information that appears to be of purposeful use in the immediate present or near future. A weather report, stock market quotations—you can think of innumerable examples. Unfortunately, very little serious non-fiction falls into that category.

"Second. Since there is a drive toward gregariousness in all men and women, they want enough information to permit them to converse intelligently with other men and women. Hence, they will read items which they think will interest others. A small percentage of people want information because they have come to believe that it makes one 'cultured,' and that culture is desirable. An even smaller percentage, pitifully small, wants information because of a conviction that it will aid them to function more fully.

"Third. There is a desire for information which the reader hopes or desires to use personally in the future. The description of a foreign country which he hopes some day to visit is an example of this. This desire frequently blends in with the desire discussed in the second generalization. The major difficulty with appealing to this desire is the difficulty of making the reader believe the information *ever* will have any personal use to him.

"Now right here is the place, I think, that the writer may easily be led astray. He assumes that because his subject is important enough to arouse a reader's desire for information about it, that alone is enough to make him finish reading about it. He forgets that the reader is subjected to other drives for information which may be of much more immediate use to him; hence, some technique to overcome those other drives is needed. He assumes that if he makes his points clearly and often enough, the reader will remember them. He forgets that repetition, unlinked to purpose, has little lasting effect on memory. But, I'm afraid I've made a speech."

"You have," said the Author. "A very discouraging speech. Isn't there an affirmative side to your theory? Up to now you've done a fine job of making a non-fiction book seem like an impertinence."

The Fiction Writer

"Of course there's an affirmative side. Let's try to get at it by seeing what the novelist does. He, at least, has no doubts that he has to battle for his reader's attention. The writer of idea-articles can assume that people will read him because of the importance of the subject. But the fiction writer knows that he must entertain or the book won't be read."

"And what does he do?"

"I don't say he does this consciously, but actually he looks over the field of human purposes and drives and asks himself which are the ones which have a strong, immediate reaction. Sex, for example. He knows almost any man will look, if only for an instant, at a 'cheesecake' picture. If he can get some of the same element in his writing, he can probably hold the reader against a desire to read a book on, let us say, modern housing.

"But, basically, what he acts on is a curious factor which is inexplicable but universal. It is the fact that one of the greatest fascinations of the human race is conflict with the unpre-

dictable. Keep that phrase in mind. It expresses the really great lure of living. Yet, actually, most people lead pretty humdrum lives. They know what their work will be each day; what their meals will be like; what their leisure will be like. They want something more uncertain; for conflict, as I pointed out, is bred in their bones. So they take it out in gambling, sports, the radio serial, the mystery book, the fiction story. Ever hear of Jack Woodford?"

"Isn't he a man who wrote a cynical book on how to write fiction to make money?"*

"Yes, and very good a lot of it is. He gives this superficial but forceful example of a formula for purely commercial magazine fiction. Create a beautiful female creature, and also a handsome male creature who, it is made clear, *ought* to marry the beautiful female. Readers, he says, will then *want* them to marry. Woodford says he doesn't know why the reader should want them to, but I think it's pretty clearly a desire for vicarious sex consummation. Then introduce obstacles to the marriage. Despite the fact that the reader is pretty clear

* *"Writing and Selling." By Jack Woodford. New York: Doubleday, Doran. 1940. 336 pp. $1.*

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from the start that the obstacles will be overcome, if there is *some* doubt, if they are made interesting enough, and the young people clever enough in circumventing them, the reader will follow through to the end. In short, Woodford advises mixing sex with a vicarious conflict with the unpredictable."

The Publisher paused. The Author looked at him almost defiantly.

Technique and the Constructive Appeal

"What do you want me to do in this new book? Portray the problems of slum clearance through the story of a boy and girl who couldn't find a room in which to sleep together?"

The Publisher laughed.

"You would probably increase your number of understanding readers if you did," he said. "But I don't think you need to resort to that. However, that doesn't mean there are no lessons to learn from the techniques of the novelist. Readers find *pure abstractions* difficult. Incidentally, remember I said 'pure abstractions.' It's much easier for them to think in concrete, personal terms. Take that illustrative sentence mentioned before: 'Fifty per cent of our housing is substandard.' Let's put it into the concrete and personal."

"How?"

"Well, suppose you say: 'Half of American families live in homes without running hot water or sufficient light, and so crowded that children have to sleep in the same room as their parents.' Ten times as many readers will understand that statement, and be much more impressed by it. In short, most readers can follow problems of people more easily than abstract problems. And if you can paint those problems in terms of overcoming personal obstacles, so much the better. But that's only technique. To get to the basic problem of appeal you must go back to my chart of human behavior."

"And what do you get from that?"

"I said there were a lot of conflicting drives in us all of the time. I pointed out that some, like sex and acquisitiveness, were strong; they leap into control when given half a chance. I also pointed out that when one was undergoing an experience under the impact of a powerful drive, he learned quickly, and *tended to remember what he learned*. But then we come to a curious fact, completely unexpected.

The Deep-Seated Drives

"The inner urges include not merely these top-layer drives which are easy to translate into concrete action. They also include drives for abstractions, such as beauty, love, truth, which are often very hard to translate into concrete action. That's why people find it difficult to understand pure abstractions; they are rarely related to immediate purposes. It is hard for YOU to put one of these deep-seated drives into full control. Yet they are the drives which have brought forth all the best in the history of man.

"These basic drives are, as I said, hard to arouse, but they have terrific sustaining power. Indeed, it might almost be said that the harder it is for YOU to put any particular drive into full control, the more power you will have when YOU have done it. Love of beauty and love of mankind are such drives. Almost no one has ever really achieved the latter, but the few who have done so have been able to accomplish miraculous feats. Buddha and Joan of Arc are probably examples. And love of mankind is directly akin to the most powerful drive, and the most difficult to arouse, the drive of man to transcend himself.

"If there is any meaning to human history, it can certainly only be interpreted in the light of that attempt.* The human race started as little families who feared and hated each other and eked out a meagre living for each family. They were ignorant, superstitious, and cruel. But over seven thousand, or seven thousand, thousand years, they have made tremendous progress in overcoming these defects. You will readily admit man has transcended apparently insuperable limitations in the material world. Look for a moment at the non-material. Put in juxtaposition a barbaric clan and our 135,000,000 people who no longer live in terror of their next-door neighbors, who at least teach their children ideals of tolerance and fair play, and in a large part of their lives carry out those ideals. Then it will be clear that man has transcended himself in the spiritual field again and again. Granted, we still have a long way to go. The spark *can be* struck, and the flame started."

The Publisher paused for a moment.

"I hadn't intended to make a second speech," he continued, "but I guess I have. Well, so be it. Let's come back to the book I want you to do. I'm *not* asking you to palliate it with sex or stories. I want you to try

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* *This view is brilliantly set forth in one of the too little-read books of our time, "Man the Measure; a New Approach to History." By Erich Kahler. New York: Pantheon Books, Inc.* 1943. 700 *pp.* $5.

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to appeal to a far more difficult and powerful emotion, the desire to transcend oneself in a conflict with future unpredictable change.

"If you ask me to tell you in detail how to do it, of course I can't answer. I can only repeat: present your thesis in the terms of a personal conflict with the unpredictable in which any reader can at least see the *possibility* of participation. Present it at least in part as a problem of human beings, not of pure abstractions. And honestly believe that there resides in all men and women a desire to transcend themselves as well as a desire for personal gain.

"Perhaps, then, you *can* offer a plan to resolve the conflict, a plan to which all interested groups will subscribe. Some may do so only because you have made them believe they can derive some direct or indirect personal benefit, but some may find you have touched off in them a transcendent desire to abolish ugliness and filth that is ready to blossom. Timing is very important in these things."

Abstractions and Actions

Both were silent for a moment. Then the Author spoke.

"I suspect," he said, "that I still have an urge to write, because I've followed your arguments closely and suddenly my mind has been clarified on a point to which I've given a lot of thought recently. It is true, as you say, that most people find pure, generalized abstractions difficult; indeed, scientific abstractions, such as Einstein's, are beyond the grasp of all but a few. And even those abstractions which people can grasp, such as truth, beauty, and justice are often hard to translate into long-range, personal action. Too many conflicting pulls, perhaps.

"Yet all of the great accomplishments of mankind, including the acts which you call transcendent, have begun with an abstraction, and then been worked into special concrete action. Maxwell conceived the abstract idea that electromagnetic waves existed; Hertz began to look for those waves and proved their existence; Marconi applied them in making a concrete radio receiver. Now any number of people can make and use radios.*

"But after a generalized abstraction has been worked into spheres of concrete action, these spheres become little specialties incapable of arousing general enthusiasm. For example, radar is a wonderful development of radio, but it hasn't the imaginative excitement of, say, the abstract theory of cosmic rays. So it would seem that the more expert the specialist becomes in his chosen field of action, the less chance he has of arousing one of your deep-seated drives which spring from an imaginative abstraction.

"The modern non-fiction writer faces a seemingly impossible paradox. If he wishes to arouse action, he must appeal to high general abstractions which are the very ones which are the hardest, not only to get at, but to translate into personal purpose. If he goes to the other end of the scale, he becomes a specialist, interesting only to a small number, and offering to most of them a basis for limited action at best.

"What we have overlooked, I think, is that we should be able to make the reader understand the *process* by which the abstract becomes concrete. There we might be able to excite the reader with an overall plan and still show him that there is a level at which his personal participation is possible. Few readers would ever see any personal use for a theory of electromagnetic waves; quite a large number could probably have seen the possibility of making the first radio receiver; innumerable people can make and improve radios today. There is always a level at which personal participation is possible.

"Similarly, I should be able to show the process by which the abstract ideas of equality, justice, and beauty can be translated into a working democracy, with fair play for all, and with man-built edifices that match our natural beauty. I am sure there is a level of participation for everyone in this process. But to do it, I can't limit myself to pious platitudes nor to blueprints of a dream city. I must boldly strike out into psychological, biological, and philosophic fields which are not my special province, in order to appeal to man as a whole. If I do so, I know the specialists in those fields will swoop down on me like hawks and point out my mistakes and superficiality. But it would be exciting to try. Someone must risk his reputation as an expert in order to arouse the 'whole man' into action in a specialized field. Now *I've* made a speech."

"Don't tell me," said the Publisher with a smile of pleased surprise, "that you have actually changed your mind and have decided to do the book?"

"Suppose," said the Author, with an even broader smile, "I let my chromosomes decide. If your theory really holds water, they'll drive me to it anyway."

"I'll settle for *that*," said the Publisher.

John Wharton, of Paul, Weiss, Wharton & Garrison, lawyers, is author of "The Theory and Practice of Earning a Living."

* *See that delightful and highly instructive book, "The Education of T. C. Mits." By Lillian Lieber. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc. 1944. 230 pp. $3.*

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THE NEW
INNER SANCTUM MYSTERY
Vol. XI May 24, 1947 No. 5

Duluth Divorce Rumors Linked With Mexican Murder

Beautiful Iris Duluth is rumored to be seeking a Mexican divorce from her ex-Navy husband, Peter Duluth, with whom she was instrumental in solving five sensational murder cases.* Friends who regarded the Peter Duluths as an outstandingly happy couple among the young married sleuth set are staggered. Mrs. Duluth, it has been discovered, plans to wed dashing young British novelist, Martin Haven. This may throw new light on the "accidental" death of the novelist's heiress wife whose shattered body was found yesterday below the balcony of her home.

There is considerable curiosity here as to whether Peter Duluth will investigate this murder in which his estranged wife is involved. It is thought in some quarters that Mr. Duluth is otherwise occupied: he has been seen at local cafes with a striking English beauty of doubtful reputation.

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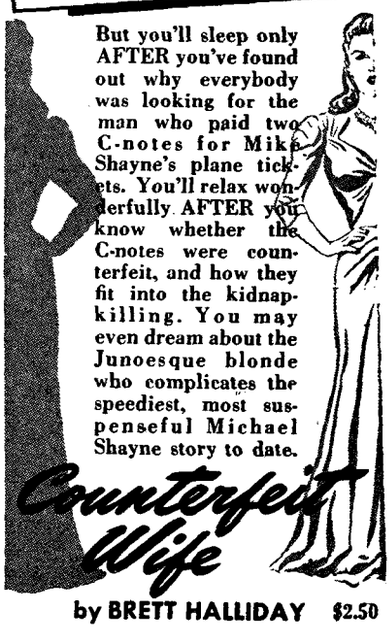

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Boy Meets Gun

THE AMBOY DUKES. By Irving Shulman. New York: Doubleday & Co. 1947. 273 pp. $2.50.

Reviewed by BENJAMIN APPEL

WEAKER than the recent very similar "Burial of the Fruit" by David Dortort, this novel offers convincing proof that we are living in an age fascinated by violence for the sake of violence. The young slum American who takes to gun or knife in his rebellion against society has attracted many writers in the last few turbulent years. If the rebels in Wright's "Native Son" and Algren's "Never Come Morning" seem more significant, it is because their creators did not limit themselves to violence for its own sweet, bloody sake, as does Irving Shulman. Wright was also concerned with race relations and social justice, while Algren's intense poetical eyes and imagination translated the grim episodes of tabloid-land into literature.

The Amboy Dukes are a pack of two-legged tomcats, constantly scrapping, tearing at each other, yowling, and making tom-cat love. The action rarely stops for anything except to draw a quick, violent breath preparatory to more violence. Still there are scenes where the author seems tempted to deviate from this formula. We see Frank, the teen-age slum kid, and his sister riding on a bus along Fifth Avenue and comparing what they see with their block in Brownsville; there are characters that hint of undeveloped material that would have meant a richer book: Frank's father, the union man, who never worked in a non-union shop; Stan Alberg, the gym teacher who tries to build up a healthy recreational counter-pull against the sinister activities of the Dukes. But the characters, even the chief character, Frank Goldfarb, are thrown to the wolves of the action-plot. Which is unfortunate because the author indicates here and there that he has the makings of a good novelist. The character Crazy is rounded and meaningful. Genuinely powerful scenes break up the succession of the not-so-genuine whose counterparts can be seen at any cinema.

Because of its naturalistic style, this novel has been compared with "Studs Lonigan." Both Frank and Studs are seen against a backdrop of poolrooms, street corners, cellars, dance halls, and brothels — "facts-of-life" scenes that so easily become boring due to over-repetition in both books. But Farrell's naturalism is large-size and as a result much more vital; it includes not only having Studs talking it up tough and rough with the other tough-and-roughs in the poolrooms, etc., but also portrays Studs at home, at church. Shulman's naturalism never does more than sketch in Frank's world outside the poolrooms.

Contemporary life has always offered the greatest challenge to the novelists of any period. To seize what is in motion, and to make of it a meaningful pattern and symbol, is a big-sized job.

Beirut Triangle

SIROCCO. By Joseph Kessel. New York: Random House. 1947. 175 pp. $2.50.

Reviewed by ROBERT PICK

HERE is a first-rate part for Victor McLaglen—Hippolyte Bibard, a French sergeant of partly Oriental origin, a tower of a man, a fearless fighter of Syrian rebels and a proud taker of women if ever there was one. The story reveals the darker recesses of Hippolyte's heart by pitting him against his superior, the very man he admires most—"Mehemet Pasha," alias Major Féroud, a kind of French Lawrence of Arabia. It's all about the infatuation of both men with a delicate young dancer in Beirut and her own passion for the powerful non-com. How the major, an inconspicuous-looking, bald-headed, middle-aged man wins out in the end against his rival and also against himself shall not be told here. "Wonders are many, and none is more wonderful than man.

Frankly, however, I'd say that the roads M. Kessel's two protagonists are made to follow in this melodramatic tale are a bit too wondrous. At least one of these characters seems to be a case history for Havelock Ellis rather than the credible picture of a great colonial military man going native and being caught in the throes of sexual passion. Yet with so much to be said against the book it is only fair to add that as sheer story-telling it will frequently hold the interest of the reader. The time is apparently before the late war, and thus the local atmosphere—embattled desert outposts, Beirut headquarters, night spots with dancing nudes, hashish dens, and the rest—has an almost nostalgic effect on the reader, unless, like the present one, he is mad at himself for no longer enjoying this sort of thing as much as he used to back in the days of Abd-el-Krim.

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VON SUPPE, FATINITZA OVERTURE. Boston "Pops" Orch. Fiedler. Victor 11-9261(1) $1.	Brilliant recording; considerable hall resonance.	A—	Typical Pops—noisy, a brilliant, humorous, marvelously played trifle.

VARIABLE RELUCTANCE

THE General Electric pickup cartridge, now available in most radio parts stores, is of tremendous interest to record buyers. This cartridge is the first of an expected series of similar new types, at least three of which are on the way to production now. The GE can give performance that compares with the fanciest professional pickups heretofore used, costing in the hundreds of dollars. Its price is $7.50.

The GE uses a magnetic principle called, picturesquely, variable reluctance—a term that suggests to this non-engineer no more than Disney's dragon and Ferdinand the bull. There is no more than the sapphire point of a needle, almost invisible, mounted on a tiny horizontal strip of metal, protected by guards and supported by a clear wisp of plastic. The whole playing mechanism is incredibly small yet, so far, has proved surprisingly tough.

Unfortunately, you can't simply replace your crystal cartridge with this one. The GE's output is very low, about that of a microphone (.1 volt) and must be pre-amplified to bring it up to strength. In addition it must be equalized—the bass tones brought up—before it will match the balanced sound your crystal produces. Both are done together via a fairly simple one-tube circuit that must be built to go with the pickup; your serviceman should build it cheaply for you from GE's diagram. (Needless to say phonographs that come originally with GE pickups will have all of this taken care of.) The pickup runs lightweight, an ounce or so, and can be fitted into many present arms, including recent changers with lightweight arms. (I'd hate to guarantee it in some strong-muscled changers I've seen!)

In action the GE is remarkable; I have yet to account for some aspects of the improvement over my last crystal pickup. Two things stand out. First, though the GE reaches easily above ten thousand, it seems materially to *reduce* scratch—even compared to an ordinary crystal pickup. This impossibility is accomplished I gather partly through needle shape and partly via the pickup's insensitiveness to vertical vibrations. Whatever the reason, the results are astonishing. Secondly, a startling increase in realism comes from the virtual absence of any needle chatter, and from the absence, too, of the unpleasant resonance effects that come from standard needles. We are normally so accustomed to the sound of the pickup itself, buzzing away, and to the peaks and buzzes that get into the speaker from the needle that to be entirely unaware of them is a wonderfully pleasant, new feeling! Still another high-priced advantage: the GE plays the ends as clearly as the beginnings of your records, in contrast to the frequent fuzziness of the old-fashioned system.

Difficulties so far encountered: The GE will collect lint and dust between the needle point and its side guards; the music goes fuzzy, sometimes out entirely. Remedy: blow. The pickup is sensitive, like other high fidelity units, to variations in record groove shape. Some records it will not play without fuzzy sounds. It is sensitive to side-pull and will play fuzzily when the arm sticks, or when the machine is not exactly flat. Being sapphire, the point will wear. Only practicable procedure: buy a new cartridge. Diamond points may be available later, I'm told, and well worth it.

EDWARD TATNALL CANBY.

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"FOR MEN OF DISTINCTION"

NO, THANK you—no whiskey or wine;
But a bottle of beer would be fine.
It's not that I've gone on the wagon
Or scorn the carafe and the flagon:
There's nothing amiss with my ticker;
I've still got a taste for the stuff;
But I had to renounce drinking liquor—
I wasn't distinguished enough.

You see, when I look at those magazine ads
Extolling the brands and the blends,
I gape at the pictures of elegant lads
Enjoying a glass with their friends.
Impeccably dressed for an Easter parade
In the handsomest cutaways ever displayed,
They stand by a mantel of Adam design
Or loll in a Chippendale chair
While quaffing a delicate goblet of wine
Or a beaker of mellow old Crût 69
With a worldly and negligent air.
These fellows would die
If they dribbled their rye
On anything short of an Ascot tie,
And they'd think me a bounder for fair
If I entered their circle improperly dressed
(No crease in my trousers, no polychrome vest)..
They'd say to the host: "Who invited that coot?
That rotter who drinks in a blue serge suit?"

So hand me no highball: I haven't the heart
To drink, till I've purchased the clothes for the part.
A man who partakes of the vintage of Hebe
Must look as impeccably tailored as Beebe.
I'll wait till I'm dressed like the consular set
And sporting the Legion of Honor rosette:
Then watch me indulge in the stuff!
I'll put on my spats and go down to the vats
And select me a tasty champagne;
But at present, dear friends, I refrain:
I'm just not distinguished enough.

NORMAN R. JAFFRAY.

Normand L. Denis, acting secretary of the Providence Poetry League, 173 Peace Street, Providence, R. I., writes:

> We have started in Providence an ambitious program of encouraging college students to write verse, and of giving them the opportunity of meeting professional writers, artists, and musicians so that they can absorb the common problems of other arts in considering their own. We are not seeking a common idiom but rather more reason to consider the individual expression of each one of us as worthy of cultivation. Aware that there is no accepted idiom and that editorial taste is a matter of policy requirements, we are making studies and criticisms of "current" periodical verse to see if we can approach the style of published material without losing sight of our own individual expression.
>
> We plan to write over a period of years and finally to offer our collective efforts to some professional critic to edit when we have achieved a quality of expression that we at Brown University can present to the undergraduates of other colleges. As yet we have not discovered any writers who could be put alongside the Yale or Harvard group, but we are hopeful. We hope that other colleges in the East will join with us in extending interest in professional verse to every campus. If, as it is said, professional poets can do no more than write for other poets, we believe that we owe it to our generation to meet them half way, rid ourselves of our prejudices in studying their techniques, problems of communication and their intentions, to write poetry ourselves, market it and take our turn in being criticized while helping to shape the critical appreciation of poetry that is yet to be written.
>
> We are writing to you to acquaint you with our designs and, we hope, through your sympathy to create interest among other collegiate communities. If there is to be a revival of interest in poetry, as after the last war, it ought to be through a conscious cultivation of taste in the classroom, in the community, and in the periodicals of restricted circulation where the poet and his audience are actually in association with one another. The college magazine and the local newspaper furnish that medium.

* * *

THE SITWELL BLUES

I read Sacheverell Sitwell in the middle of the night
And Edith
(Not Osbert)
But Edith,
While the hospital's long corridor lay in drugged uneasy quiet
A cough, a snore a bell-sound of tired hurrying feet.
Edith and Sacheverell
Honey-colored hair and pale strange faces,
Castles waterfalls and gardens
Belong to Edith and Sacheverell
And some very fancy verse as well
Full of Eliot—echoes oh my Edith darling
(They say you wear more beads than any other human)
But I forgive you Edith
For you played so charmingly
In water-gardens thro old mazes
Walked thro lilies
So carefully sedately, stepping like gazelles
In the terraced castle-gardens
You Sacheverell
And Edith
Shaking daintily your sad sham jester's bells.

KATHERINE DAY LITTLE.

* * *

Writes Eugene B. Vest of 727 E. Broadway, Monmouth, Ill.:

> Year after year new printings and new editions of "The Three Bears" pour from the presses, one and all without indication of the author on their title pages, unless some modern adapter issues the story under his name. People in general never know the author of this classic any more than they know the authors of "Goody Two-Shoes," "Twinkle, twinkle, little star," "The boy stood on the burning deck," "Mary had a little lamb," "Swiss Family Robinson," or "Black Beauty." The price of too great popularity as a writer of children's stories appears to be anonymity.
>
> But Robert Southey needs all the publicity he can get to revivify his sadly faded reputation. The author of such excellent bits as "The battle of Blenheim," "The Inchcape Rock," and "The Legend of Bishop Hatto" deserves credit also for his wonderful children's story. Cannot American publishers, at least, be persuaded to put his name on future editions of "The Three Bears"? Publicity by the Phoenix might help.

* * *

CHANGE

The world is too much with us,
The poet sadly said.
But that was many years ago,
And much has since been sped.

One fact of minor moment
Is frequently forgot:
The world's still with us, late and soon,
The poet, though, is not.

RICHARD ARMOUR.

* * *

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

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MEDICAL STUDENT—24, wants interesting summer job. Speaks German, Italian, French. Box 706-T.

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DOUBLE-CROSTIC NO. 687

Reg. U. S. Patent Office

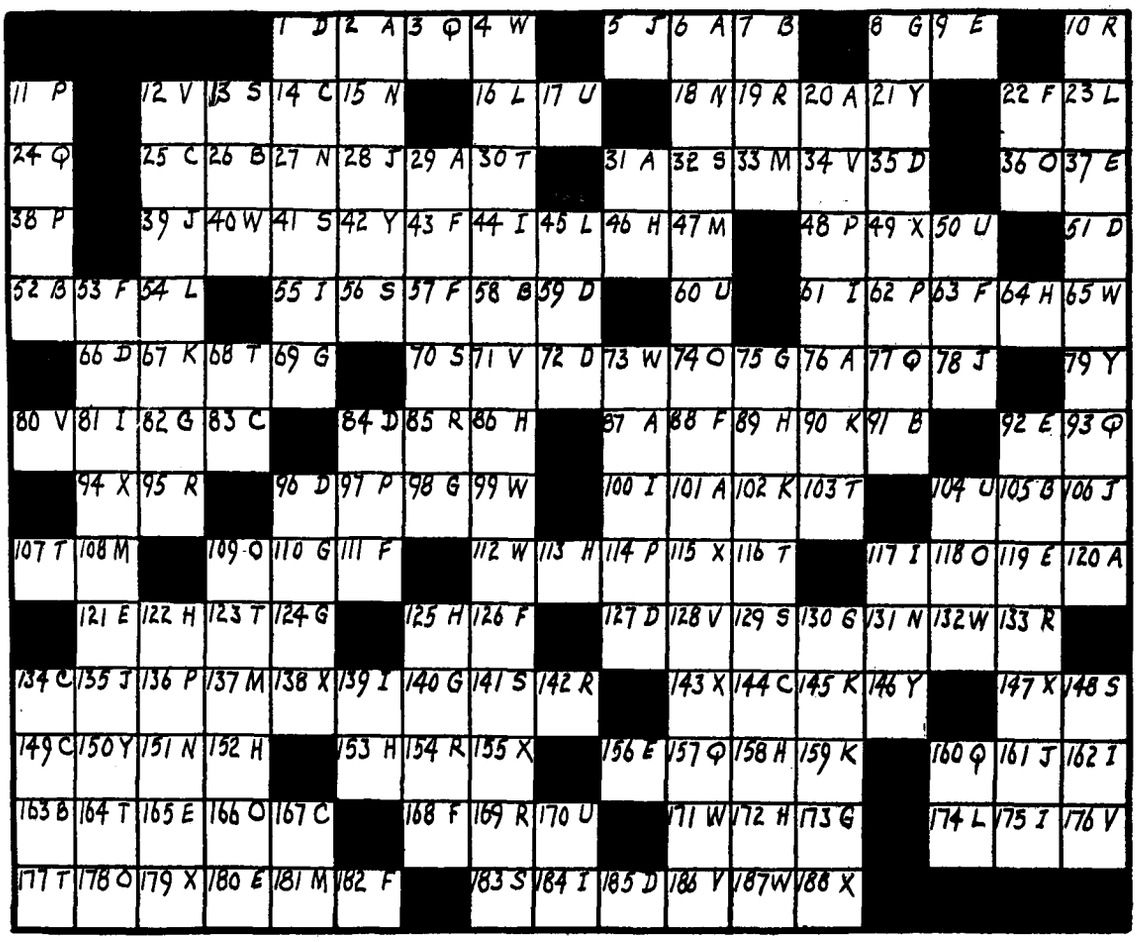
By Elizabeth S. Kingsley

DEFINITIONS	WORDS
A. Novel by Sir Walter Scott (1826).	87 2 6 120 31 29 101 76 20
B. Encircled as with windings.	163 58 7 26 105 52 91
C. Rolled or swayed suddenly to one side, as a ship or a drunken man.	167 149 83 25 144 14 134
D. Author of the poem "Morituri Salutamus."	72 127 96 59 84 35 1 66 51 185
E. Pulitzer Prize play by Owen Davis.	165 180 9 92 156 37 119 121
F. A hortatory or authoritative address.	168 182 53 111 43 63 22 57 88 126
G. Pulitzer Prize play by Sidney Kingsley.	98 69 130 140 124 8 110 75 173 82
H. Changing color.	125 64 158 172 46 153 86 122 113 89 152
I. Poet laureate who succeeded Southey, 1843.	61 175 139 162 100 81 184 44 55 117
J. Surmounted an obstacle.	5 161 28 39 78 135 106
K. Revolutionary War captain, author of "The Emigrants" (3 vols., 1793) which championed divorce and women's rights.	67 102 90 145 159
L. Genus of tall, fresh and salt marsh herbs, common to both hemispheres, cattail, flag, reed mace, etc.	16 54 174 23 45
M. Confederate Army officer defeated by Sheridan at Winchester, and elsewhere.	108 181 33 137 47
N. Intlated or bombastic (of style).	151 27 18 131 15
O. Indian tribe of which Pontiac was a chieftain.	36 74 178 166 109 118
P. African bird allied to the cuckoo, and often called "plantain eater."	48 62 114 38 97 136 11
Q. Stage name of French emotional actress (1856-1920).	3 24 160 77 157 93
R. Indian tribe of Iroquois Confederacy; helped British in Revolution.	85 169 95 133 10 19 142 154
S. American poet and fiction writer, excelled in vers libre (1882-1932).	148 70 183 13 141 56 32 129 41
T. American ex-editor, author of a recent book about his profession.	30 103 116 107 123 177 164 68
U. Common land (Sp. Law).	50 104 60 170 17
V. Comedy by Ben Jonson first acted in 1606.	34 80 176 128 71 12 186
W. A soft fabric napped on one or both sides (2 wds.).	40 73 4 99 187 65 132 112 171
X. The final resort (2 wds.).	115 138 188 94 155 179 143 147 49
Y. Figure of speech, chiefly one of four kinds: metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, irony.	146 150 42 79 21

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-odd words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square of the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Read up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).



Solution of last week's Double-Crostic will be found on page 15 of this issue.

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